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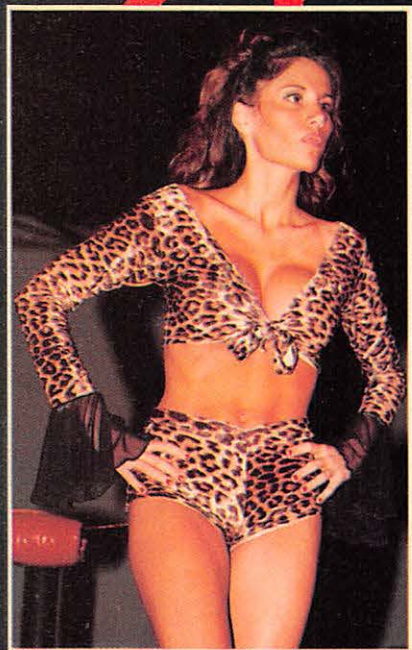


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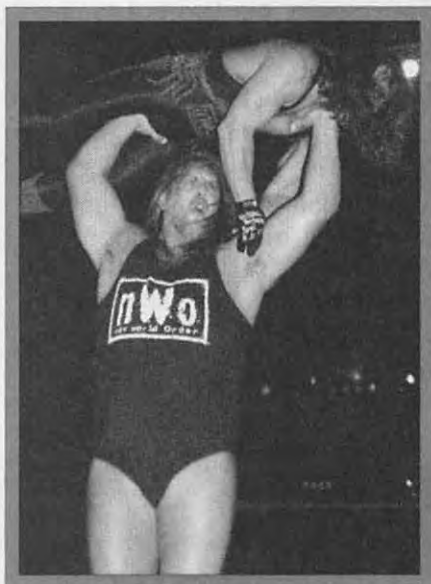
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# Wrestler

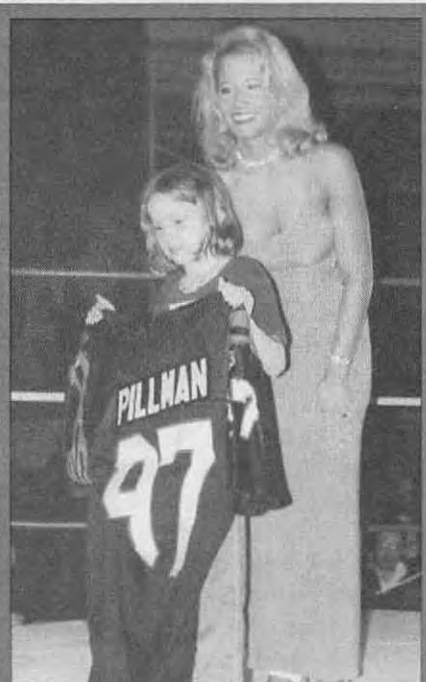
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# YOUR Letters

## BIG HIT

I'm not the kind of person to write a letter that says a magazine was superb, but I've got to congratulate everybody who worked on your fabulous *True Life Stories* issue (*The Wrestler Presents*, Summer 1998). I have learned a lot about the athletes featured and hope these kinds of stories will become a permanent thing at London Publishing. I know I will never look at Dallas Page, Sunny, Chyna, and Jerry Lawler the same way again.

LUC CHARBONNEAU  
Montreal, Quebec

core Shane Douglas? Or that Larry Zbyszko got Bruno to train him by simply walking into his backyard and asking him? Wrestling fans, if you haven't read a copy of this magazine yet, get one.

If London Publishing ever does another one of these specials (and I hope you do), here are some of the wrestlers I would like to read about: Sting, Vader, Sabu, and Perry Saturn. I would love to see how these guys looked as kids.

ERIC HYDE  
DeKalb, IL

*True Life Stories* was the best magazine London Publishing has ever put out. Bryan Ethier did a masterful job of making these larger-than-life characters appear just as human as the rest of us. I was especially surprised to learn that Chyna was such a gregarious and humorous child. Her demeanor in the WWF is anything but that.

I sincerely hope you guys continue to produce these *True Life Stories*, because it puts a new slant on what we watch every Monday night.

JEREMY FENNACE  
Winslow, TX

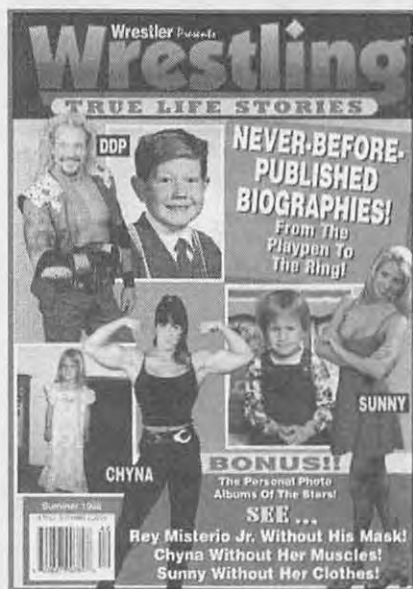
[Editor's note: Our next edition of *True Life Stories* will appear in the *The Wrestler Extra* (Winter 1998), on sale November 3.]



Lex Luger still battles foes like Curt Hennig and Hollywood Hogan, but now he has Kevin Nash and Randy Savage on his side. That, says reader Anna Magellan, leaves Luger no room to criticize Scott Steiner for joining the NWO.

## HYPOCRITE?

Will Lex Luger actually do something with his career now that he's joined NWO Wolfpac? I sure hope so. Lex really petered out as a WCW lieutenant. Maybe "Big Sexy" and Sting can get him back on track. Lex certainly has more left than Hollywood Hogan or Bret Hart. I hope he can retire them once and for all. I hope the fans will not let Lex off the hook for criticizing Scott Steiner when he joined the NWO. To cheer Luger and boo "Big Poppa Pump" would be hypocritical. But then again, professional wres-



London Publishing has received nothing but positive feedback from fans who have read our *True Life Stories* issue. The staff is honored that this issue has been so well-received.

I just want to say, "Good job!" on your special *True Life Stories* issue. I just got my copy, and it was great! Who would have thought that cute, little Troy Martin would grow up to be violent, hard-



ting is full of double standards, isn't it?

ANNA MAGELLAN  
Tampa, FL

## R.I.P. JYD

I heard that Junkyard Dog recently passed away. What a shame. JYD was the most exciting wrestler I've ever seen in my life. More importantly, though, he was a good guy. He always made time for his fans by signing autographs and taking pictures with them. I have several autographed pictures with him myself. Although I never spoke to him about it, JYD seemed genuinely grateful for all the love he got from his fans and his great fame in the 1980s. He acted very humble. May he rest in peace.

BERNARD COLLINS  
New Orleans, LA

## HARDCORE HEROES

When will the Dudley boys quit fighting Tommy Dreamer and The Sandman and challenge Rob Van Dam and Sabu for the ECW tag team title? Buh Buh Ray and D-Von are the biggest and baddest team in ECW. Van Dam and Sabu aren't nearly as hardcore as these guys. Bill Alfonso and his team wouldn't know what to do with "Big" Dick and Sign Guy running around at ringside.

MATT HARVEY  
Kissimmee, FL

## GIVE US AN "F"

I am a long-time subscriber to THE WRESTLER, and I usually agree with most of what appears in the magazine, but I found plenty to disagree with in your "WWF Midyear Report" (September 1998).

(Continued on page 50)

# Wrestler

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Junkyard Dog squares off with a young fan after a 1986 match. JYD's relationship with the fans, as well as his accomplished career, will immortalize him, says Bernard Collins.



# WHAT'S

# Happening

By Bill Apter

**W**ITH MILLIONS OF TV viewers watching in astonishment, **Paul Bearer** was viciously beaten in his own living room by **The Undertaker**. The attack was so violent that Bearer was unable to leave his home for 10 days. He didn't, however, press charges against the man he used to manage.

"It is my way of saying that the door is open for him to return to my domain," Bearer told me in an exclusive phone interview. "I could have had him thrown in jail for a long time, but **Kane** and I are two very good-hearted people, and we

could not have stood to see his half-brother with a prison record."

Now it looks to me like there's a good chance Undertaker will return to Bearer's camp. At King of the Ring, it was Undertaker who bashed WWF World champion **Steve Austin** with a chair, enabling Kane to win the belt from him in a first-blood match.

"Kane and I have our problems with each other," Undertaker told the press afterward, "but I could not stand to see Austin go after his blood in good conscience, no matter what he and Paul Bearer have done to me. And I couldn't stand to see him set himself on fire (which he would have

had to do had he lost)."

Regarding a new relationship with Bearer, Undertaker said, "I don't see that happening."

**Mankind**, who is also managed by Bearer, told me he was "monitoring the Kane, Uncle Paul, and Undertaker situation on a daily basis. Welcome aboard, brother Undertaker. Come down into the pit and enjoy life the way you were destined to enjoy it!" How profound!

"**Diamond**" **Dallas Page** wants to silence all those critics who say he's afraid to wrestle new WCW World champion **Bill Goldberg**.

"The word fear is not in my vocabulary," DDP said. "I have



And the strange saga of The Undertaker (above left) and Paul Bearer and Kane (above right) continues. The Undertaker helped Kane win the World title from Steve Austin, but Taker followed up by brutally attacking Bearer. Despite this, Bearer still might consider reuniting with Taker. Taker doesn't think that will happen.





Bill Alfonso has two men and three belts in his ECW camp now. Rob Van Dam (left) has been TV champ since April, and he and Sabu (right) won the tag belts from Chris Candido and Lance Storm in June. Guess who's taking credit for their success.

called Goldberg out already, and he hasn't responded to me. You talk about fear—well, that's probably the word to describe what he feels when he thinks about getting into the ring with me. I have a lot of respect for what Goldberg has done. The man is on my list, but he ain't my top priority. I got nothing to prove against him, and if I take on Goldberg, one 'Diamond cutter' and it's all over."

A little tip for those of you anticipating the release of the "PW/500" on October 6. Goldberg's victory over **Hollywood Hogan** didn't make our job any easier!

**Rob Van Dam** and **Sabu** are the new ECW tag team champions after a wild match with **Chris Candido** and **Lance Storm** on June 27 in Philadelphia. "I am totally responsible for orchestrating this victory and getting us those tag belts," said their manager, **Bill Alfonso**. "They were friends, they were rivals, and I brought them back together as a perfectly oiled machine. Now Rob Van Dam is the TV champion,

Van Dam and Sabu have the tag team belts, and all that's left for us to get is **Shane Douglas'** title.

**Keiji Muto** is scheduled to don the face paint and again trans-

form himself into **The Great Muta** on September 7. This time, though, it will be for a special occasion. He'll be teaming with his father, **The Great Kabuki**, who will be retiring after the match.

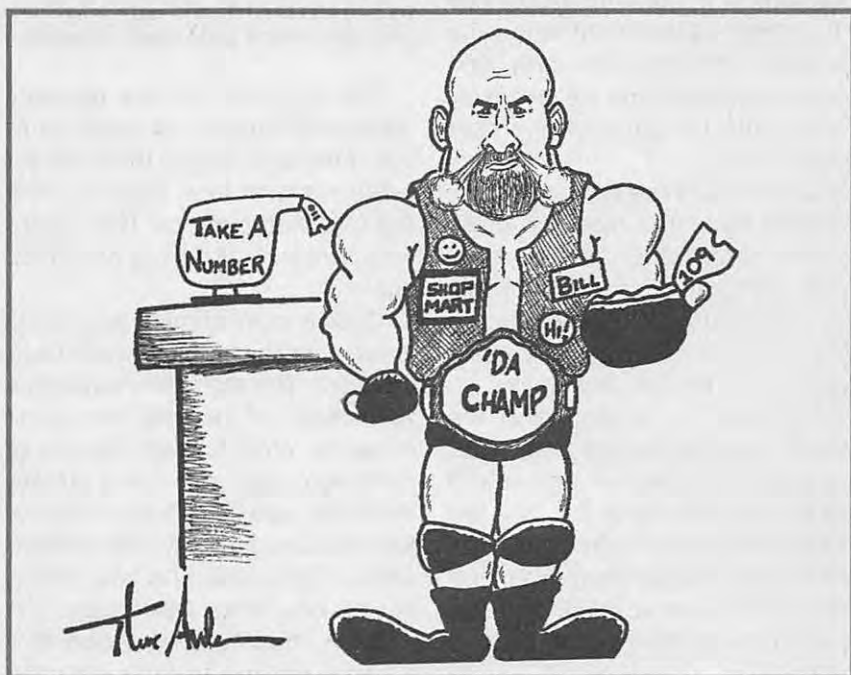
"He will wear his traditional Kabuki makeup," said Muto, "and I will honor him with Muta face paint." Their opponents hadn't been determined as of press time ... **Koji Kitao** has retired after an 11-year career. Kitao, who also has experience as a sumo wrestler, will be trying his hand at promoting various sports events in Japan.

After being beaten by 1998 WWF King of the Ring **Ken Shamrock** back in June, the 1995 King of the Ring, **Mabel**, says he doesn't think he will stay in the WWF.

"They knew I was badly injured, and they still forced me to wrestle him on my first night back," he said. "I can't believe they did that to me."

*(Continued on page 51)*

## Steve Anderson's View





# NO Holds Barred

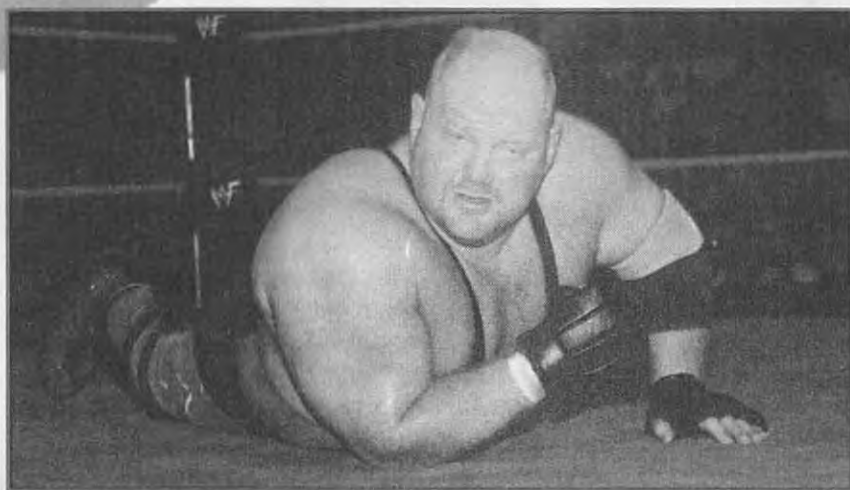
with Steve Anderson

## RULES, SCHMULES ...

They mean so little in professional wrestling today. When two of the most heinous men in wrestling happen to be Eric Bischoff and Vince McMahon, would you expect anything else? Funny thing is the fan favorites are the ones slipping through those loopholes. Stipulations mean nothing. Basic rules mean zilch.

Promoters love to sell matches with certain stipulations attached to them—like “loser must unmask” or “loser leaves the federation forever,” but these stipulations are rarely enforced anymore. The importance of a match is lessened when the consequences are taken away. And fans feel cheated and are less likely to buy into the gimmick the next time around.

Case in point number one: Vader wrestles Kane in a mask vs. mask bout at Over the Edge. The loser must relinquish his mask. Now that was interesting. We all wanted to see what the face of The Undertaker's little brother looked like, so we pulled for Vader. But we would not find out on that night, as Kane beat Vader and made Vader tear his mask off. No, the features did not shock us, as Vader has always worn more of a “face jock” than a mask and frequently discards it in the heat of battle.



We all got to see Vader unmasked after he lost to Kane at Over the Edge. But then, we had all seen him without a mask before. And he got to put the mask back on the next night. Some great match stipulation.

The fact that he had recently undergone surgery to repair damage done to an orbital bone did not make his face look hideous. And the following night on *Raw*, there was Vader ... wearing his mask again.

Case in point number two: Sable loses a match to Marc Mero at Over the Edge. The stipulation states that as a result of the loss, she must leave the WWF forever. Grass-root campaigns from within and outside the WWF start in full force. Reverse that decision, they say. Mero tricked Sable into thinking he was letting her pin him. A few weeks later, she is back, courtesy of Vince McMahon, waving to fans who are

looking at anything but her hands.

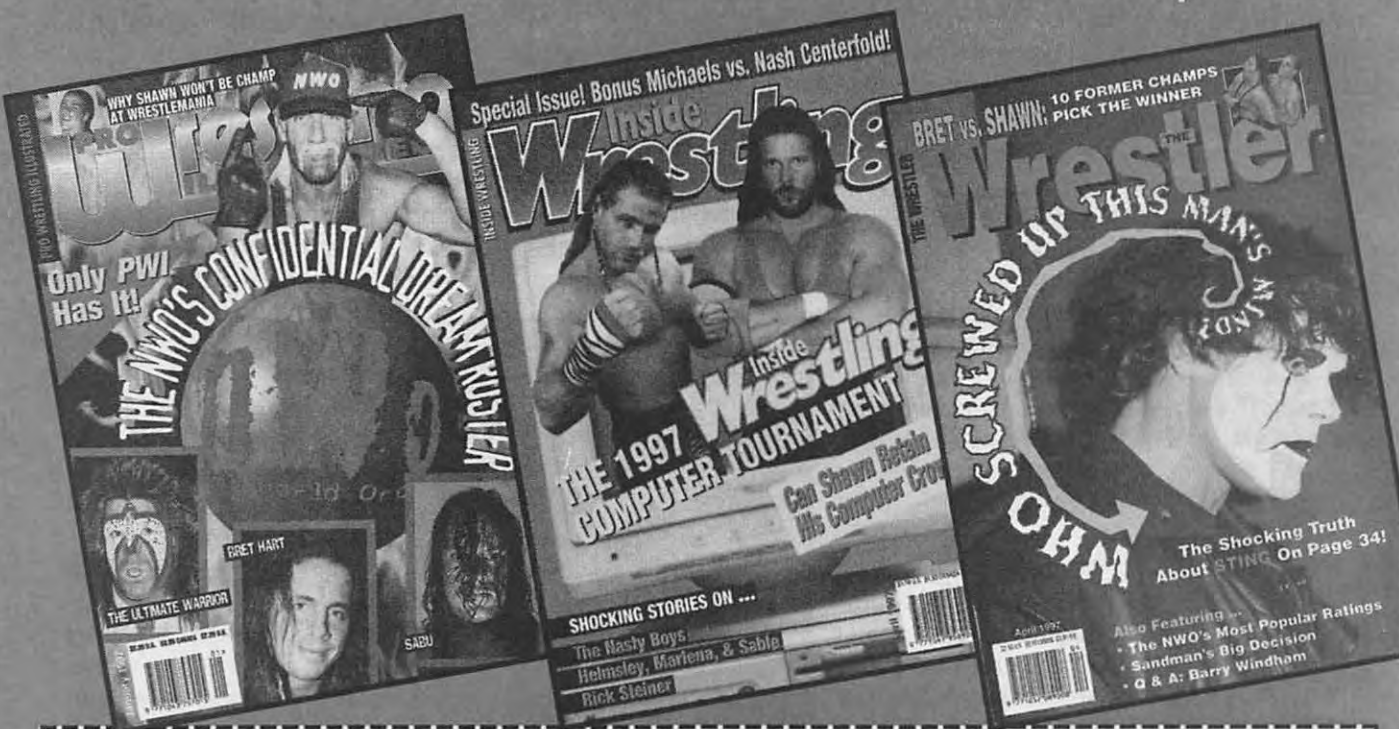
Even *PWI Weekly* gave Vince a “Yay” for bringing her back (it gave Sable a chance to get revenge on the nefarious Mero). Excuse me? That's just one of many rules that Vince has broken, and he gets official praise from this publishing company?

Case in point number three: What happened to J.J. Dillon's edict over the power bomb? Now that The Giant is with the bad NWO and Kevin Nash with the good NWO, the WCW Executive Committee has seen fit to ignore the banning of the move altogether. Is it proof that Dillon was only protecting his then-

(Continued on page 54)

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By  
Harry  
Burkett

I KNOW, I know. You're wondering, *Where's Andy Rodriguez?* My esteemed colleague will no longer be writing "Blindsided." I have the distinct honor of inheriting his other columns as well, including PWI's "Win, Lose, Or Draw" and *Wrestle America's* "Newsline: WCW."

Like many of you, I have enjoyed Andy's columns for years. Fortunately for us, he will still contribute feature stories to THE WRESTLER and its sister publications.

In choosing a topic worthy of the column's name, I've decided to discuss the most recognizable figure in the sport ... and "blindsided" you with an opinion that few of my journalistic cohorts share:

Hollywood Hogan will triumph over NWO Wolfpac.

That's right. The black and white will defeat the black and red, even though conventional wisdom says Hollywood's grip on the WCW World title was tenuous at best. The logic behind this theory was that every wrestler who had defected to The Wolfpac became a potential contender to his title.

In reality, Kevin Nash and Randy Savage have always worked against Hogan behind the scenes. Now, instead of stabbing Hogan in the back, these men have been forced to reveal their true red and black colors. Then, of course, Hogan's detractors rejoiced when Lex Luger and Sting joined NWO Wolfpac.

At one time, Luger managed to wrest the WCW World title away from Hogan for five days, but that was it. Sting, who finally captured the title after two bogus victories, dropped the belt to Savage after only two months as champ. Sting's poor showing as WCW flagbearer, despite Tony Schiavone's shameless characterization of the "Stinger" as the greatest champion of our time, proved that 18 months of rafter-lurking was not worth the wait.

Nash, Savage, Luger, Sting, and, oh, yeah, Konnan. Hogan has already proven he can handle Savage, Luger, and Sting. Konnan? I won't hold my breath. Nash is still an unproven commodity who has yet to face Hogan one-on-one. We all remember

that Hogan survived The Giant's onslaught. And Nash has yet to prove that he's better than that 7'4" chain-smoking wonder.

There's only one unifying factor within NWO Wolfpac: a passionate hatred for Hogan. That just isn't enough to cement the bonds within a wrestling supergroup. In fact, everyone in NWO Wolfpac seems ill-suited for the role. Nash, Savage, Luger, and Sting aren't bad boys by any stretch of the imagination. Gangsta rap music for Randy Savage? Luger, the epitome of a corporate wrestler, as a howling "wolfie"? Sting as a red-faced smart aleck? I'm only 26 years old, and I'd feel like an utter fool trying to act this hip. Maybe if these guys held up a convenience store, I'd buy into this "ga-ga," as Hogan calls it.

After scanning the ranks of the NWO's rebel faction, take a look at NWO Hollywood. The Giant, to my understanding, has become a close friend of Hogan outside the ring. Yes, The Giant split from Hogan once, but it seems that he made a conscious decision to surround himself with allies who made him feel comfortable. Hogan offered that security.

Scott Steiner, who considers himself quite a thespian these days, believes Hogan can help his film career. As long as Hogan proves useful, it's doubtful "Big Poppa Pump" will betray him.

The NBA's Dennis Rodman, who seems quite compatible with Hollywood's chic lifestyle, doesn't spend enough time in WCW for a Wolfpac turn to be beneficial. Bret Hart, however, probably befriended Hogan just so he will lower his defenses. Rest assured that Hogan knows this better than anyone.

And that brings us to "the source behind the force," Eric Bischoff. Having the WCW president in your hip pocket never hurts.

Despite what you're probably thinking, I am not a Hogan loyalist. I think he has brought dishonor to the WCW World title with his incessant scheming and infrequent defenses. But at least Hogan, along with most of NWO Hollywood, is being true to himself. Each member of NWO Wolfpac, on the other hand, is merely a sheep in wolf's clothing. □



Hogan has the power

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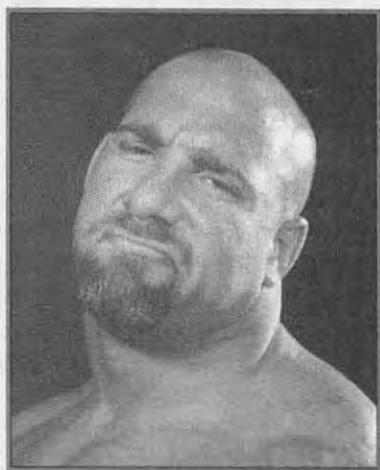
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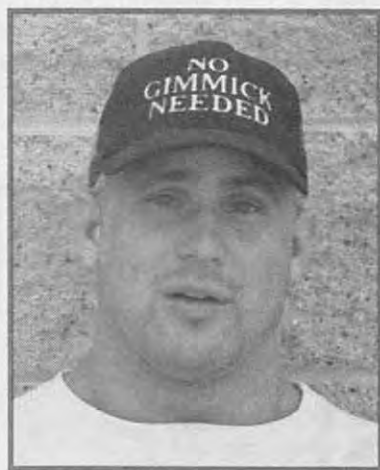


# T H U M B U P



**Thumbs Up** to Bill Goldberg. Just in case you thought this fierce competitor was only out for himself, he proved otherwise by putting his neck on the line and saving former NFL roommate Kevin Greene from an attack by NWO Hollywood. Goldberg could have just stood by and watched while The Giant and Curt Hennig unleashed their assault, but he decided to join in, squarely putting himself at odds with the NWO's evil clique. This isn't the kind of behavior we had necessarily come to expect from a man who had run roughshod over his WCW competition and headed on a one-man wrecking course to the top, but we were glad to see it.

**Thumbs Up** to Sable. Let's face it: That was an evil thing Marc Mero did when he made believe he was going to let Sable pin him at Over the Edge. As a result of the ruse and Sable's pinfall loss to him, she was forced out of the WWF. But Vince McMahon—possibly acting on the wishes of millions of wrestling fans who wanted her back—reinstated Sable, and now she's doing what she does best: coming out to the ring and distracting Mero, who is keeping company with Jacquelyn these days. Serves him right. Sable should never let Mero forget how his ego and selfishness destroyed their relationship.



**Thumbs Up** to Chris Candido. Lance Storm is no longer with The Triple Threat; Candido, Bam Bam Bigelow, and Shane Douglas took care of that. But Candido and Storm were in an uncomfortable position over the past few months: They had to defend the ECW tag team title even though they hated each other. Well, rather than "tanking" the title, they defended it earnestly. And Candido has shown signs of maturing. He's not bickering with Storm nearly as much as he used to, and he even patted Storm on the back and shook his hand after victories. It's too bad they lost the belts to Rob Van Dam and Sabu just when they were starting to get along again.

**Thumbs Up** to Chris Benoit. Very few people consider "Crippler" Chris a nice guy. But after Benoit lost his eight-match series to Booker T, he didn't complain about the referees or claim Booker T got lucky. Instead, he told Booker T he was the toughest wrestler he had ever faced and assured him that if he ever needed somebody to watch his back, he'd be right there. Again, as in the case of Bill Goldberg, we're surprised and pleased to see a wrestler putting himself on the line when he doesn't have to. If by some chance you didn't respect Benoit before, you certainly should do so now.

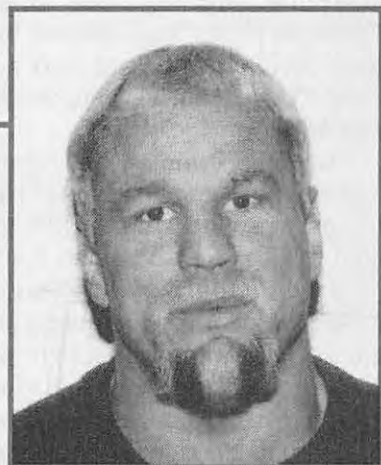


# THUMBS Down



**Thumbs Down** to Elizabeth. And we thought Randy Savage was the unstable one in the Savage-Elizabeth relationship. Stupid us. The evil Elizabeth pulled off the double-cross of all-time when she left Savage and joined NWO Hollywood—basically the same group that has done its best over the past few years to destroy and humiliate her. Has she no shame? Has she no heart? How could she turn her back on Savage in such a heinous manner? Especially when it's clear Hogan and his men are merely using her for their own purposes. Is that what Elizabeth wants to be—an NWO Hollywood pawn?

**Thumbs Down** to Scott Steiner. Speaking of despicable, Rick Steiner's estranged brother is really scratching the bottom of the barrel these days. He's the lowest of the low. His attitude is the pits. He's hanging out on movie sets with Hollywood Hogan, claiming he's some kind of great actor, talking about how great he is, and acting arrogantly beyond belief. Funny thing, though: We haven't seen Scott do much wrestling these days. In reality, what the NWO did was break up the Steiners, one of the best tag teams in the world. Scott, you were tricked.



**Thumbs Down** to The Undertaker. It's one thing to go head-to-head with Kane, your half-brother. It's another thing to attack a weak manager like Paul Bearer, who has really done nothing more than shoot off his mouth. There's no excuse for 'Taker's vicious attack on Paul Bearer, including the especially violent one that took place during the "Hell In The Cell" match on *Raw*. Then, the following week, Undertaker raided Bearer's house. Wasn't it Undertaker who just several months ago didn't want any part of a feud with Kane? Well, now he's jumped head-first into the fray ... and landed on the wrong man.

**Thumbs Down** to Brian Christopher. You want insecure? We'll give you insecure. We'll give you Brian Christopher, who so far hasn't been able to make it big in the big time, but has done a very good job picking on smaller wrestlers in the smaller promotions. Recently, Christopher attacked Kid Wikkid—his former friend and tag team partner—and destroyed his Power Pro Wrestling Young Guns trophy. Why would he do such a thing? "Because I felt like it," Christopher said. "Because it was funny." Fine. And we feel like telling Christopher he isn't going to get anywhere by pulling stunts like these.





# CORRESPONDENTS

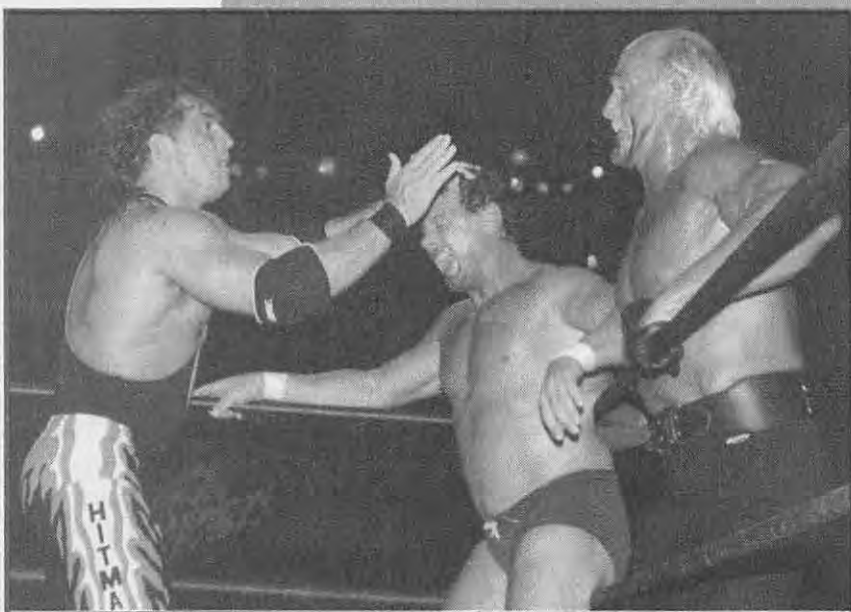
# Repörrts

**Baltimore, MD (Correspondent—Ray Ney):** One would think that Roddy Piper and Randy Savage could get along long enough to wrestle one match against NWO Hollywood without bickering, but at The Great American Bash, they showed that they couldn't. And Bret Hart and Hollywood Hogan, their opponents, took full advantage of this.

From the opening bell, Piper and Savage squabbled over little things like who would start the bout against Hogan. When it was finally decided that the "Rowdy One" would, Piper immediately called for a timeout. As Hogan looked at Bret in disbelief, Piper attacked him from behind. But as Piper punched Hogan to the mat, The Disciple whacked Piper with the WCW World title belt. Hogan recovered, though, and gained the advantage on Piper. Hogan eventually tagged in Hart, who continued to punish Piper.

The only real encouraging moment for Savage and Piper came when Bret attempted to headbutt Piper's stomach, only to have Savage cover Piper's mid-section with a chair just before impact. Piper knew he desperately needed to tag in Savage, and he finally did after enduring several minutes of punishment.

When Savage entered the ring, he bombarded both opponents with flying fists. However, as the "Macho Man" climbed the ropes to prepare to execute a flying elbow-drop, his injured knee gave out and he tumbled to the mat. Hogan



Bret Hart and Hollywood Hogan double-team Roddy Piper in the corner during The Great American Bash. Hart and Hogan worked well together against Piper and Randy Savage. That was one of the main reasons they won the match.

took this opportunity to wrap Savage's leg around the nearest ringpost, stretching the weakened knee. With Savage in excruciating pain, Bret entered the ring and applied his "sharpshooter" to get the submission win.

After the match, Piper and Savage argued again as Gene Okerlund interviewed them. The two began brawling after Savage clotheslined Piper, and their confrontation turned into an impromptu match. Piper took full advantage of Savage's weakened condition and used a figure-four leglock to make Savage submit.

In other bouts: Booker T pinned Chris Benoit ... Canyon defeated Perry Saturn ... Chris Jericho defeated Dean Malenko by disqualifi-

cation ... Juventud Guerrera pinned Reese ... Chavo Guerrero Jr. pinned Eddy Guerrero ... Booker T pinned WCW TV champion Dave "Fit" Finlay to win the title ... WCW U.S. champ Bill Goldberg pinned Konnan ... Sting pinned The Giant.

**York, PA (Correspondent—Jeff Amdur):** ECW fans at the York Fairgrounds expected to see a lot of exciting brawling, a lot of different weapons used, and quite a bit of bloodshed in the eight-man "extreme lottery" match pitting Spike Dudley, The Sandman, New Jack, and Tommy Dreamer against Jack Victory and Buh Buh Ray, D-Von, and "Big" Dick Dudley. They got all that and more.

The Sandman's name was

picked to begin the bout, and he squared off against D-Von, who immediately swung a chair at him. Sandman retaliated by splashing him with beer, then caning him and throwing him out of the ring. For a moment, Sandman disappeared under the ring, but he quickly emerged with a ladder, which he threw into the ring.

The next two lottery picks, Jack Victory and Buh Buh Ray Dudley, joined the fray and began pounding Sandman. As this was taking place, "Big" Dick, the next lottery pick, entered, making it four against one. After all of them placed the ladder on top of Sandman and stomped on him several times, Buh Buh suplexed Sandman onto the ladder.

The next "lottery" pick was New Jack, although he, Tommy Dreamer, and Spike Dudley all hit the ring at about the same time. New Jack, of course, brought with him a trash can full of weapons. One of the first things he did was put the trash can over D-Von's head so Dreamer could hit both the trash can and D-Von's head with the ladder.

Later, Sandman put Buh Buh under the ladder and moonsaulted onto him. But "Big" Dick countered that by clotheslining the ladder onto Sandman. Dreamer, however, knocked him down with the trash can. New Jack again got into the act by taking a cheese grater to Victory's face, causing him to bleed profusely. "Big" Dick eventually cost his team the match, though, when he attempted to charge into Spike with the ladder, because Spike saw him coming. He leaped off the top rope onto the ladder, then onto "Big" Dick for the pin.

In other bouts: Chris Chetti pinned Danny Doring ... Super Nova & The Blue Meanie defeated Tracey Smothers & Little Guido ... ECW tag team champs Lance Storm & Chris Candido defeated Axl Rotten & Mahoney ... Justin Credible pinned Jerry Lynn ... Bam Bam Bigelow pinned Mike Lozan-

sky ... ECW TV champ Rob Van Dam pinned John Kronus ... Sabu beat Mikey Whipwreck.

**Moorefield, WV (Correspondent—Timothy A. Walker):**

"Rock 'n' Roll Kid" Bob Keller, a native of Martinsburg, West Virginia, knew most of the fans at this Championship Pro Wrestling card would be on his side as he battled the despised Honky Tonk Man. What he didn't expect was to hear HTM and his manager, Spike Callahan, insult the crowd before the match began.

When Honky Tonk suggested that the match be canceled so that he could hold a concert, Keller became even more determined to beat him decisively.

Keller took an early advantage on Honky Tonk Man and sent him scrambling outside the ring. Before the referee could complete his 10-count, Honky returned to the ring. He showed why many consider him to be one of the sneakiest rulebreakers in the sport when he unwrapped the tape from around his left arm and used it to choke Keller. The fans screamed at the referee, but he was unable to locate the tape when HTM hid it inside his mouth!

With Keller down on the mat, Honky Tonk tried to wear him down with a series of armbars. Whenever Keller managed to get near the ropes, Honky resorted to choking him on the bottom rope while Callahan distracted the referee. When the referee turned his attention back to the action in the ring, Honky Tonk quickly applied a tight chinlock.

He tried to use the tape to choke Keller again, but Bob managed to work his way back to his feet and whip Honky into a corner. Keller followed that up with a series of closed fists to HTM's jaw, then grabbed the tape and choked Honky Tonk! The fans went wild



The sneaky Honky Tonk Man choked Bob Keller every chance he could when he battled him on a recent Championship Pro Wrestling card. Nevertheless, Keller found a way to pin him.

as he wrapped the tape around HTM's neck.

But just when it looked like Keller had HTM in serious trouble, Callahan climbed onto the ring apron and held him while HTM charged from across the ring. Keller escaped Spike's grip, however, and HTM collided hard with Spike, who fell from the apron to the floor. Finally, Keller rolled up HTM as the ref counted to three, giving Keller the biggest win of his career.

In other bouts: Juggernaut won a battle royal ... Shane Shadows defeated Switchblade in a chain match ... Combat Kid pinned Juggernaut ... CPW heavyweight champ Major Mayhem pinned Mohammed Kane ... Diablos Macabre (with Doc Hollywood) pinned Midsnite ... Carnage beat Okimono by disqualification ... The Masked Orderlies defeated Chain Gang I & The Pit Fighter. □

Send your reports to:  
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Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034



# YOU Asked Us

**Q:** "This question is for Kevin Nash: 'Big Sexy,' I'm a huge fan of yours, so naturally I was furious when I saw Scott Hall turn against you at Slamboree. I was just wondering what you intend to do about that rat in the future?"—Stacie Mynar, Rockdale, TX

**A:** "I'm rarely at a loss for words, Stacie," Nash muttered. "But this thing with Scotty's got me pretty bummed out. I really don't know what to say. I guess

he had to do what he had to do to get ahead, but I don't see how going to war with 'Big Sexy' can help his career. I know better than anyone how friendships come and go in this business, but I just never expected it from Scott. Then again, he has Dusty Rhodes in his ear. Part of me wants to wipe Scott Hall out, but the other half would still love to have him in The Wolfpac. I don't know, Stacie. Right now everything's up in the air."



The Outsiders in happier times. Kevin Nash still doesn't understand why Scott Hall attacked him at Slamboree, but he feels Dusty Rhodes had something to do with it.

**Q:** "My question is for Luna Vachon: Luna, what's it like travelling around with The Jackyl's parade of human oddities? You have always been on the odd side, but camping out with such grotesque individuals as these must freak even you out."—Ed Ruiz, Bayamon, Puerto Rico

**A:** "First of all," Luna sneered, "there is nothing odd or grotesque about myself or my business associates. Just because we do not conform to your standards of beauty doesn't mean we are any less human than

you are. My friends are all decent people who have overcome years of humiliation and discrimination because of their physical deformities. They have beauty that narrow-minded, ignorant fools like you cannot see. Coming from the family that has produced a Mad Dog and a Butcher, I have been conditioned to accept things that are sometimes a little different than what most people are used to seeing. I guess lunacy is in my blood."

**Q:** "I've got a question for Gene Okerlund: Gene, since Dean Malenko beat Chris Jericho at Slamboree and whipped him pretty good at The Great American Bash, do you still consider him a 'bonafide loser'?"—Steve Venetz, Lansdale, PA

**A:** "No, I don't, Steve," Okerlund responded. "But to tell you the truth, I don't think beating Jericho is any great feat for Dean Malenko. Dean Malenko uses his skills better than Jericho does, although Jericho is a very talented wrestler. Dean Malenko has a ton of experience. Dean Malenko is regarded as perhaps the most focused wrestler in WCW, while most people around here think Chris Jericho is a flake. So given the advantages that Malenko has over Jericho, he

(Continued on page 56)

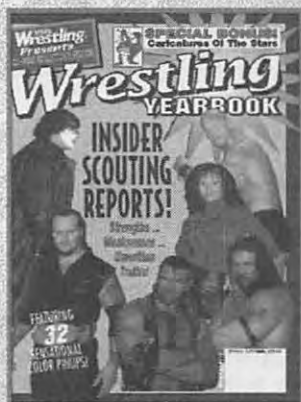
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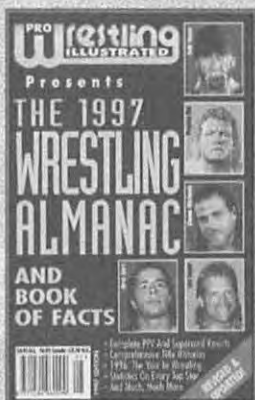
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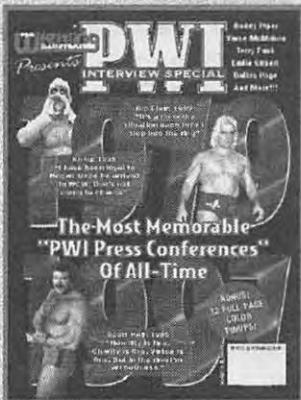
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# Introducing

By Jon Lane

## SHAWN STASIAK

**T**HE JOURNEY BEGAN for Shawn Stasiak innocently enough. He was just a kid following his father around like any son would. But when your father is a professional wrestler who makes his living making life miserable for the opposition, the path is like an endless trail blazed by Boy Scouts in search of wildlife.

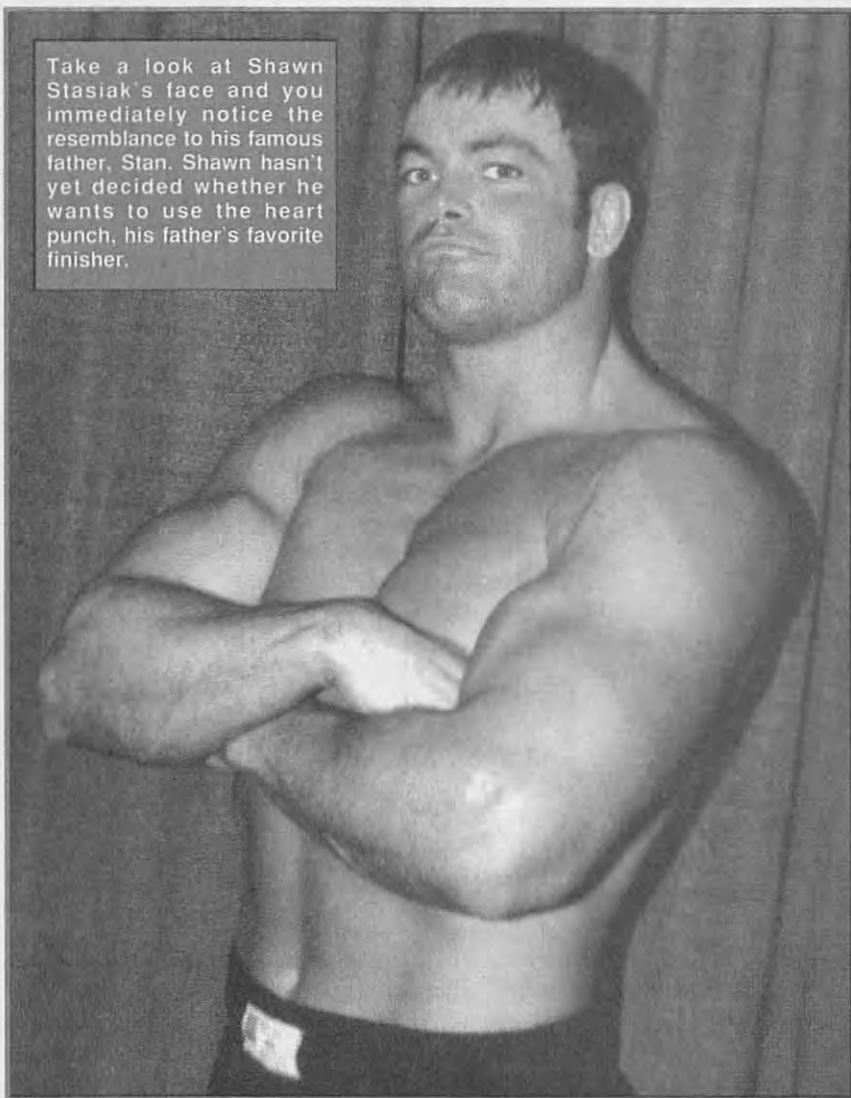
Many a passing day of Shawn's childhood was spent stuffed in the back seat of a car, U-Haul attached to the back, traveling thousands of miles across the United States and Canada. When your father is former WWF champion Stan Stasiak, the influence is omnipresent. The experience of hitting the road with his "old man" exposed young Shawn to the business and cultivated a passion that was innate from day one.

Wrestling, he quickly learned, was a sport in which he could use his vast athletic skills *and* his creativity. After all, the sport is about theatrics and image almost as much as it is about athleticism these days.

"All my friends were going to college on football scholarships," Stasiak said. "I was the only wrestler. That was my main love."

Upon Stan's retirement from the circuit, the Stasiaks settled in Oakville, Ontario, a middle-class suburb of Toronto. There Shawn took to the amateur wrestling ranks, capturing the Ontario Championships three years in a row while in high school, and finishing third and second in the Canadian National Freestyle Championships over two years. The success earned him a full

Take a look at Shawn Stasiak's face and you immediately notice the resemblance to his famous father, Stan. Shawn hasn't yet decided whether he wants to use the heart punch, his father's favorite finisher.



Photos by Bill Apter

**The last name should sound familiar to long-time WWF fans. While Shawn Stasiak is the son of former WWF champ Stan Stasiak, it's important to him that he's been able to make it on his own**

wrestling scholarship to Boise State, where he advanced to the NCAA's Sweet 16 in his senior year.

Shawn majored in communications with a concentration in audio and video. Stan pushed his son to earn a degree so he would have something to fall back upon in case a career in wrestling didn't pan out. So far, however, it has.

At one point, WCW invited him to train at its Power Plant facility, but all that time spent stuffed in the back seat traveling with his father taught him the meaning of loyalty and continuing tradition in the place where it all began. He wanted to make it in the WWF.

He got experience competing for a small promotion in Portland, Oregon, and at the suggestion of former WWF wrestler Matt Borne, he sent a package of still photos and videos to the attention of Bruce Prichard, the WWF's vice president of talent relations. Upon receipt, Prichard called to express interest in him.

He signed with the federation last year.

"He saw charisma," Stasiak said. "He was impressed with the way I was built, my image, and some natural raw ability that hadn't even been coached yet.

"Bruce saw I had the work ethic from the amateur ranks, too. He knows how tough it is. I fell short of some personal goals in amateur wrestling. I just want to make up for that here in the WWF."

Stasiak had also done some spots on the local news at Halloween, where he would paint his face and provide warnings to kids suggesting, among other things, that they not talk to strangers. He



Shawn Stasiak applies a wristlock on Darren Drosdov (right), a hold Stan used on Chief Jay Strongbow some 21 years earlier (above). Stan died last year, but his influence on Shawn will last forever.



used that footage to show the WWF his theatrical side.

"They liked the image, but they thought it looked like a Sting or Ultimate Warrior, and they were trying to get away from that," he said.

Before you go assuming that Shawn, now 28, will be a nice, clean-cut, rule-abiding wrestler, remember those Stasiak genes. Throughout his tenure in the WWF, Stan Stasiak, who died last year (a year Shawn said was the toughest of his life), made his mark as a big, mean, brawling grappler who specialized in beating the stuffings out of opponents with no regard for the rules.

With Shawn, the package is more diverse: He's a 6'4", 242-pound athletic, technically sound, high-flying competitor who, with all of 2½ months of WWF training under his belt, gave Val Venis all he could handle at an April *Raw Is War* dark match before losing to the WWF's X-rated Casanova. When he took on Darren Drosdov at a charity show at Madison Square Garden in June, he looked almost as mean as his father did when he wrestled in that famous arena.

If you show him footage of that match with Venis today and he'll

"rip it apart."

"There are so many things I've improved since then," he said emphatically.

He knows, of course, that he has a lot more to learn if he is to achieve his ultimate goal: becoming WWF champion someday. If that happens, he and Stan will be the first father-son duo to have held that belt. (Stasiak held the title nine days in 1973, beating Pedro Morales on December 1 and losing to Bruno Sammartino on December 10.) Shawn is even considering using his father's old heart punch as a finisher. His only concern is that the maneuver will be considered too simple for today's demanding fans.

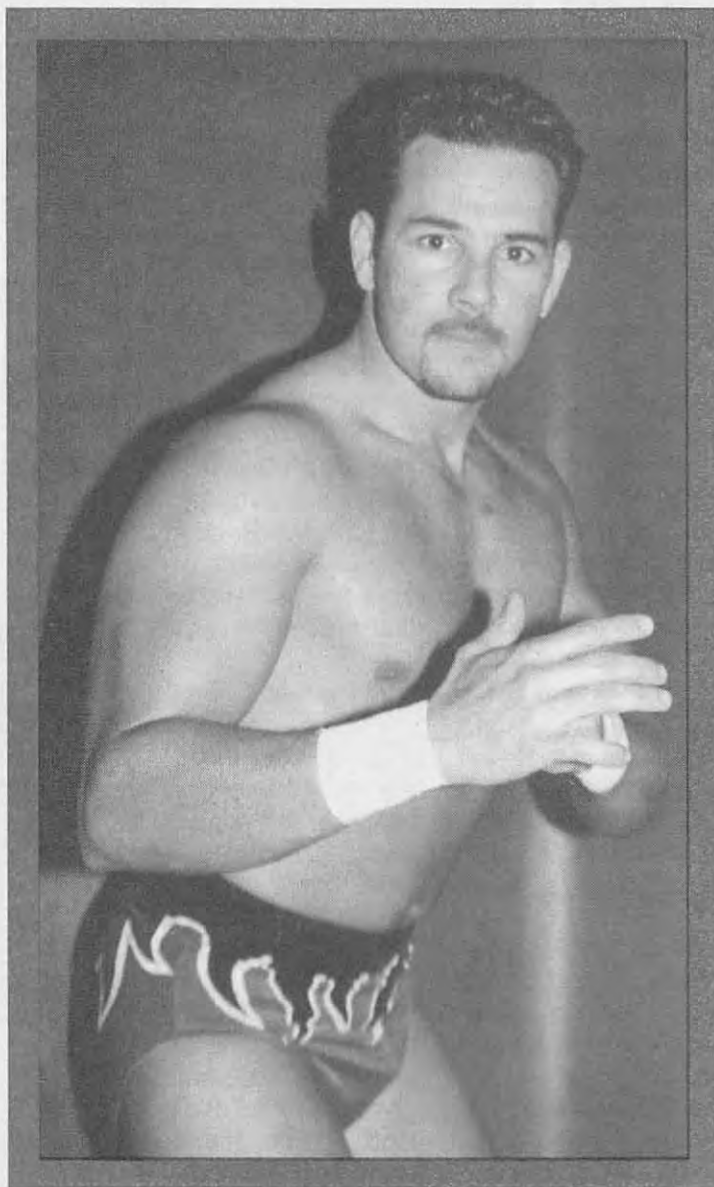
Such a decision doesn't have to be made now, though. His plan for the immediate future is simply to enjoy himself, continue learning the basics, and to compete on as many WWF cards as possible until the powers-that-be find a way to fit him into their plans.

"Sometimes it's hard to believe, you know?" Stasiak said. "I knew there'd be a time when I'd get an opportunity. It's funny how quick life goes by. I look and see the WWF logo, and I'm like, 'I can't believe I'm really here!'" □



# Q & A

## CHAVO GUERRERO JR.



**E**VER SINCE HE was a young boy, Chavo Guerrero Jr. dreamed of becoming a professional wrestler. Under the watchful eyes of his father, Chavo Sr., and two of his uncles, Hector and Mando, the young prospect learned to respect the rules, the fans, and his opponents.

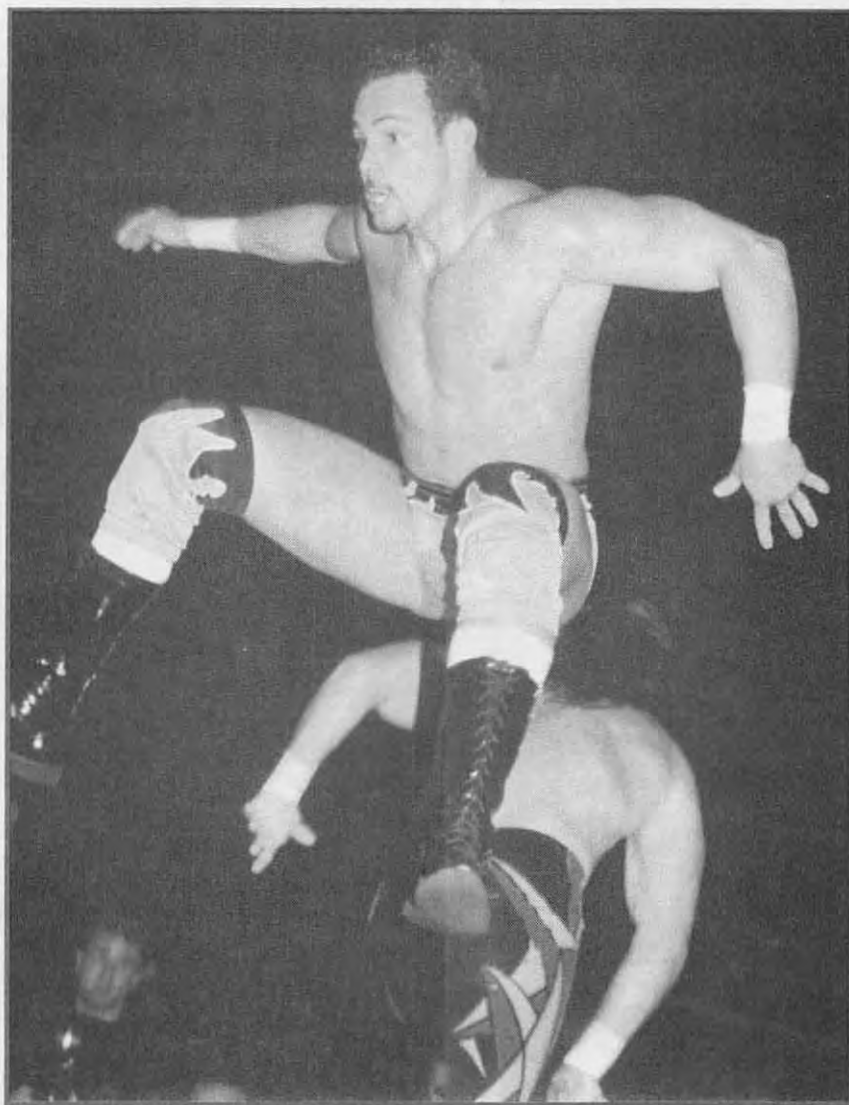
In six months, another uncle, Eddy Guerrero, was able to undermine a lifetime of lessons.

Fans were shocked last year when Eddy Guerrero turned his back on his fans and began breaking rules. But while he may have lost fans, Eddy's stock quickly rose in the federation. As the wins piled up and a few extra digits found their way onto his paychecks, Eddy offered his struggling nephew some advice: Forget the fans and cheat to win.

Chavo resisted and instead challenged his uncle to a match. Eddy agreed, with the stipulation that if he were to win, Chavo would be forced to follow Eddy's orders. If Chavo were to win, Eddy would return to his scientific ways. Eddy won.

Since falling under his uncle's influence, Chavo has become an entirely new person. Initially reluctant to take shortcuts, Chavo quickly began to embrace rulebreaking—to a violent degree. Eddy watched as his young, clean-cut nephew transformed into a maniac intent on showing his uncle that he is more than willing to "cheat to win." The big problem for Eddy is that he is now intimidated by his nephew, who dominated and beat him at The Great American Bash.

THE WRESTLER sent Contributing Writer Dan Murphy to meet with Chavo and to learn what happened to the humble, scientific high-flyer he used to be.



Chavo leaps over Eddy during another intra-family match. Chavo claims that rulebreaking is the key to victory these days.

**Q:** Chavo, I ...

**A:** Wait a second there, Dan. Watch this. Look. I've got nothing in my hand, right?

**Q:** I don't see anything ...

**A:** Right. Now watch this. (*Chavo quickly reaches into his left boot and produces a pair of brass knuckles. He holds them in the air for a moment, then returns them to his boot.*) Bang! Just like that. Pow! I can knock somebody out and win a match. Incredible, isn't it?

**Q:** Chavo, you've really made an unbelievable transformation of late. A year ago, you wouldn't have accepted a pinfall if you accidentally hooked your oppo-

nent's tights with a fingernail. Now you're sitting here showing me how you've perfected removing brass knuckles from your boot in a fluid motion. What's going on here?

**A:** I've grown up. I am a man now. I'm a Guerrero! When I was a boy, I learned things like sportsmanship. Now I've learned how to be a winner. Winners don't need rules. Eddy proved that, didn't he? Isn't Eddy proof that cheating pays? He's my favorite wrestler, you know!

**Q:** I can't even tell if you're trying to be sarcastic. Eddy is a great athlete whether he follows the rules or not. You're not as expe-

rienced as your uncle, and you're prone to more mistakes. Still, it seems as if Eddy is afraid of you these days. For you, is rulebreaking a way for you to try to make a name for yourself, or are you trying to make a statement to Eddy?

**A:** Your question is too long for me to bother answering. Let me say this, though. I don't know what has happened to Eddy. I think J.J. Dillon is talking to him, trying to break up the Guerrero family tag team before we can even get started. Why else would Eddy run from me? I'm just his little nephew. I'm weak, and Eddy is so much better than me. But I'm learning, Eddy, I'm learning!

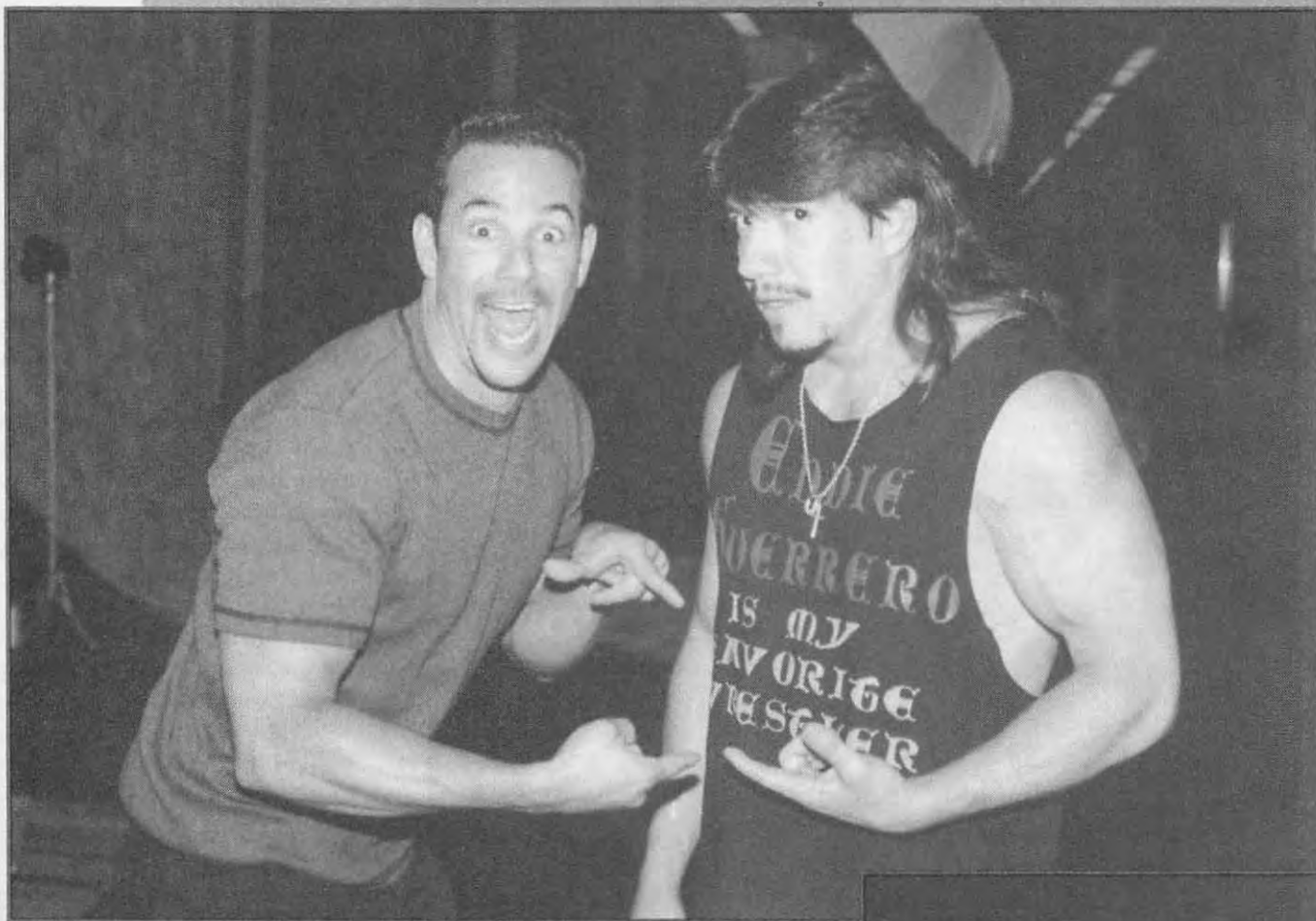
**Q:** Do you really want to form an alliance with your uncle?

**A:** What do you think? Why else would I be trying so hard to talk to him? He doesn't return my phone calls, you know. The operator says he's changed his



Eddy sends Chavo out of the ring the hard way—the same way he would like to teach his nephew a lesson or two. But why is Eddy seemingly afraid of Chavo now?





Chavo Guerrero seems a lot happier to be posing with his uncle Eddy than Eddy is to be in front of the camera (above). Once in the ring, though, Eddy has the ability to prove that action speaks louder than words (right).

phone number, but I don't believe that, of course, because Eddy wouldn't do that without telling me. Still, when I go to his house, he's always out. If I know Eddy, he's negotiating title shots for the two of us. Don't you agree?

**Q:** Chavo, I really have trouble believing that such a small taste of rulebreaking has changed you so dramatically. Is this all a plot to throw Eddy's rulebreaking back in his face, to show him how far from his family's ideals he has strayed?

**A:** I've learned how to throw fire. I can't wait to try that in the ring. *Zap!*

**Q:** Um, Chavo?

**A:** *Zap! Then—pow!* To think I spent all those years learning takedowns and submission

holds. Eddy, you've given me the key to greatness, Uncle! Cheat to win! Let me thank you, Eddy: Thank you, thank you, thank you!

**Q:** Let's forget about Eddy for a moment. Are you considering making a title run anytime soon?

**A:** Eddy won the cruiserweight title and the U.S. title. I think I can beat Booker T for the TV belt. I can beat whoever has the cruiserweight belt. Bill Goldberg beat me a few times, but I've got him scouted now and I ... wait! No, I haven't scouted anyone. That's what I used to do. I used to study videotapes, and I used to be a loser ... *un perdedor*. No, I haven't scouted anybody, but I think I can still win. Right, Eddy?

**Q:** If you could have a match against



any WCW wrestler you'd like, who would it be?

A: Oh, that's a tough one, Dan. I could beat Bill Goldberg and become the WCW World Heavyweight champion. Or I could start slowly by beating Dean Malenko or Chris Jericho to show I'm the best cruiserweight in WCW. I could beat Booker T—*zap! Pow!* But you know what? I really want to wrestle Eddy again first. I want to learn more from him.

Q: So you admit this is all a mind game to get to Eddy?

A: No, no, no, and in Spanish, *no, no, no*. I need no mind games; Eddy would wrestle me any day, and once he gets his tele-

phone connected again, I'm sure he'd tell you the same thing. He's so good at running away from an angry opponent and using the ropes for leverage and pulling the hair and so forth. I can only learn from the great Eddy Guerrero. He is a master *Luchadore*, si?

Q: Since you seem to have so much respect for your uncle, why is it that he seems to be running away from you? And why do you think he's been in such a slump since you beat him at the Bash?

A: Oh, you do not understand Eddy's ways, do you? Aha! Lesson number one: Always make people think you don't want what you want. Pretend

you're innocent, then strike when no one expects you to. Eddy pretends he's listening to all of those bigwigs at CNN, but that's only so we can team up down the road. It's a devious master plan. He's doing just fine. *Pow!*

Q: Chavo, I have to admit that you've got me confused here.

A: Let me make all things clear: Am I not on one of the biggest winning streaks in WCW?

Q: Well, except for the losses to Goldberg, yes, you are.

A: Am I not young enough to become a major player in WCW in the near future and remain a major player for a long time?

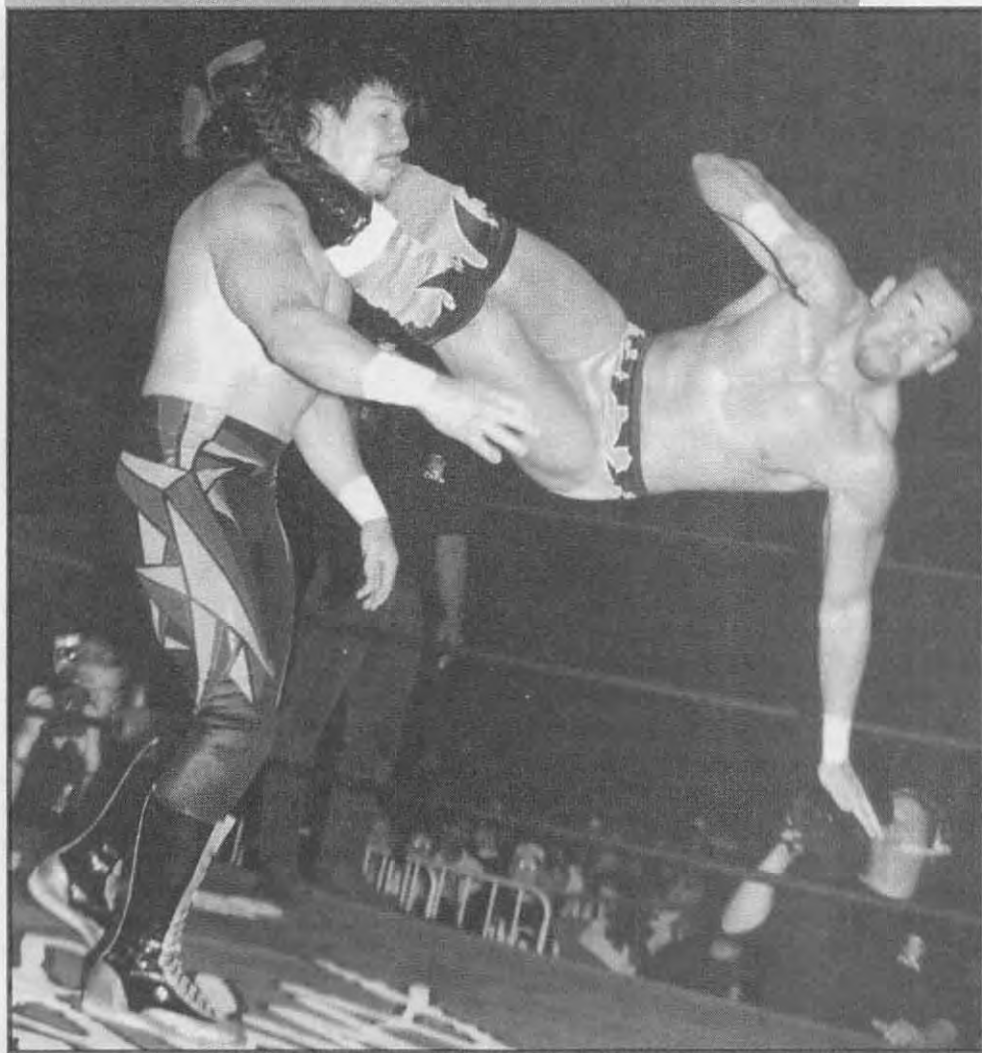
Q: Yes, you are.

A: And by using this (*Chavo again produces the brass knuckles from his boot*) and maybe some fire, or by pulling some tights and using the ropes for leverage, do you think I can become a champion in WCW?

Q: I honestly think you can win either the TV or the cruiserweight belt, or maybe even the U.S. title.

A: Then keep an eye on Chavo Guerrero Jr. I have learned that foreign objects win matches quicker than flying bodypresses. I have learned that WCW referees will let you get away with cheating if you are crafty enough. I have learned enough to become a champion. All I need now is another match with Eddy. Eddy! There is so much more I need to learn from you, and there is much more that I want to teach you! □

With moves like this flying headscissors, Chavo shouldn't have to rely on rule-breaking to score another win.

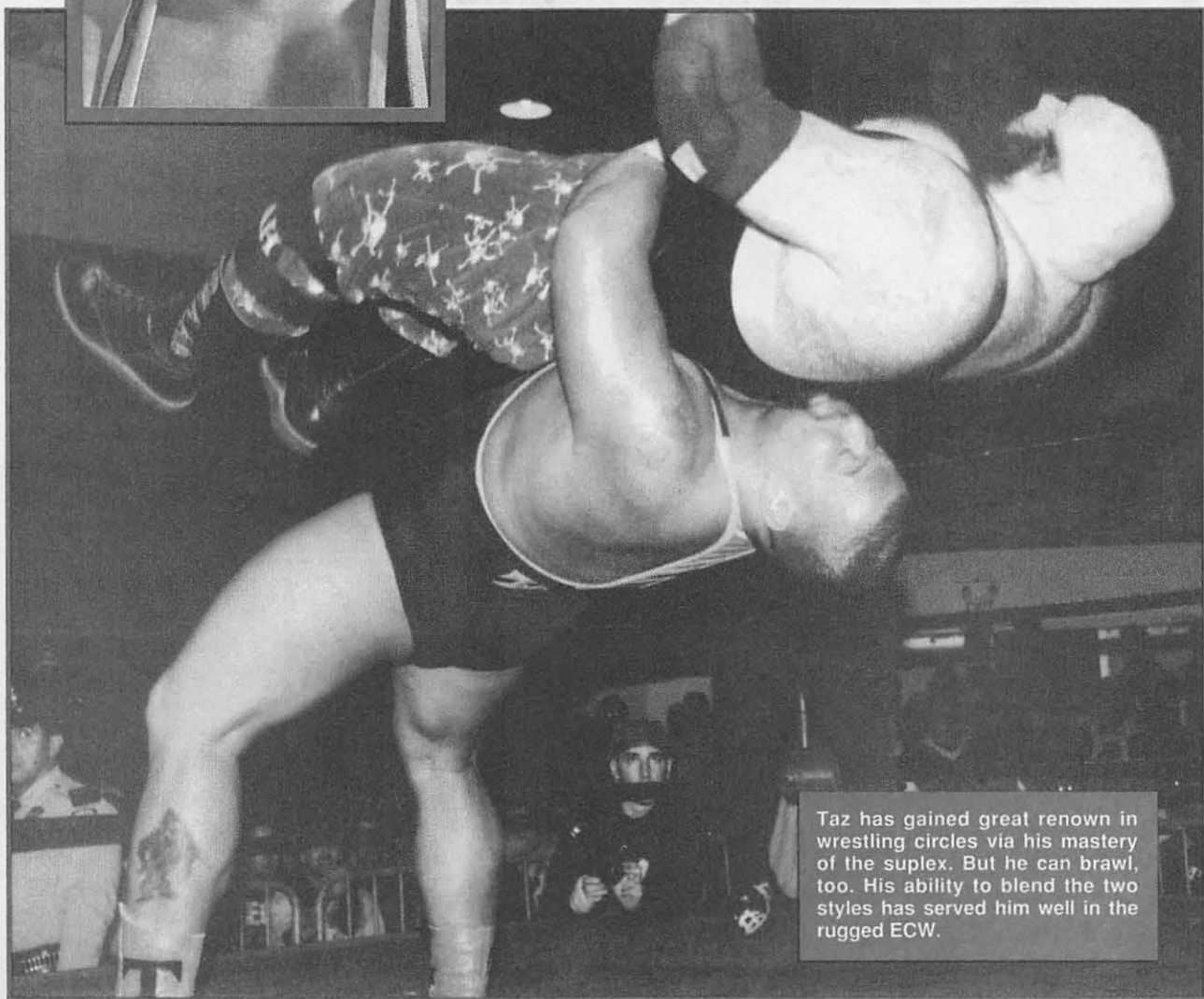
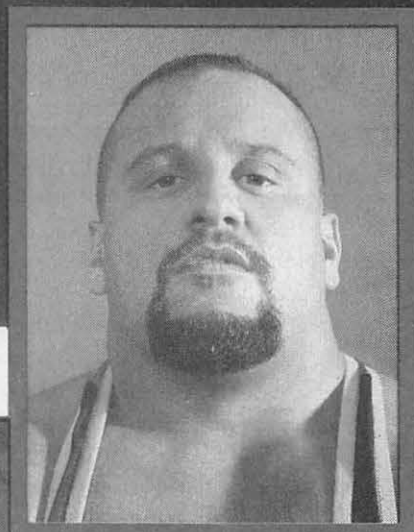




# X-Ray

THE WRESTLER PANEL EXAMINES

TAZ



Taz has gained great renown in wrestling circles via his mastery of the suplex. But he can brawl, too. His ability to blend the two styles has served him well in the rugged ECW.



### **CAPT. LOU ALBANO**

"This Taz is one mean son of a gun, but then again, you gotta be mean if you expect to survive in ECW for real long, right? Everybody knows that. But what many people overlook are Taz' wrestling skills. They don't call him a human suplex machine for nothing, daddy. You know, the Captain doesn't have anything against chairs and tables, but you gotta love the way he uses his wrestling ability to beat up on those hardcore hooligans he sees all the time in ECW."

*Capt. Lou Albano, "The Guiding Light," has managed 13 different tag teams to a record 17 WWF World tag team titles.*



### **KILLER KOWALSKI**

"Taz might be the closest thing to the perfect wrestler there is. He is almost unbeatable on the mat and has enough snarl to handle himself in ECW. And what he lacks in stature, he makes up for with heart. He's one of the most driven athletes in the sport, and inspiration is something even a great instructor like me can't teach. But Taz has gotta avoid injuries. He has to understand that taking a day off here and there to heal doesn't make you a coward."

*Killer Kowalski, one of the most sadistic rule-breakers in the history of the sport, runs a wrestling school in Malden, Massachusetts.*



### **HARLEY RACE**

"Sure, Taz can perform a suplex or two, but how many variations do you really need in an organization where the most scientific maneuver is swinging a chair? Everybody makes a big deal about his temper, but as far as I'm concerned, that temper of his has gotten in his way. Look at how he handled that beef with Shane Douglas. Completely unprofessional. Does he really think ECW will reward him with a title shot now? He can be his own worst enemy sometimes."

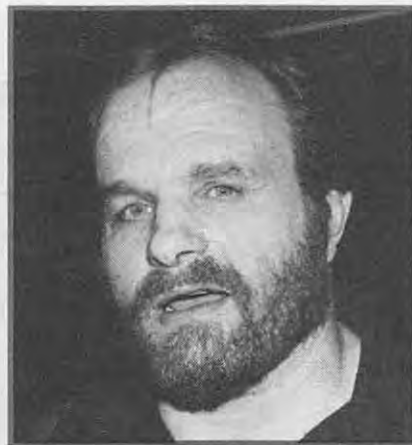
*Harley Race, an eight-time NWA World champion, has also managed top stars like Lex Luger and Big Van Vader.*



### **FABULOUS MOOLAH**

"In my opinion, darlin', Taz is just plain nasty. I don't think I've ever seen anyone as bitter or as miserable in all the years I've been in wrestling, and I've been around for quite a while. But if that's how he keeps his edge, then more power to him. He won't make a whole lot of friends in the business with that attitude, but I can tell that friendship isn't one of Taz' priorities. Nobody said you gotta like him, but a lot of those ECW fans love him to death."

*Fabulous Moolah, the finest woman wrestler in history, held the World title for 28 years. She now trains wrestlers in Columbia, South Carolina.*



### **OLE ANDERSON**

"It's reassuring to see that there are still some real men left in this sport today. Taz is a real man and a real throwback to the days when a wrestler came to the arena, took care of business, and then left. I'm not too sure what all this 'uncrowned champion' stuff is about, but Taz seems frustrated. Frustrated by all the politics and boardroom red tape he has to climb through to get a shot at the ECW belt. I can certainly understand how he feels about that."

*Ole Anderson, a five-time former NWA World tag team champion and founding member of The Four Horsemen, has been retired for several years.*

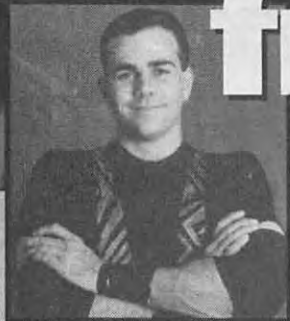


### **PAUL ORNDORFF**

"Taz has a ton of scientific skill and the heart of a champion, but he must get a grip on his emotions. It seems like he's always in the middle of some pointless feud. Taz needs to learn patience and discretion. Maybe he should think twice before taking on The Triple Threat all at once. He's been banged up lately, and that's a direct result of his feuds with Bam Bam Bigelow, Chris Candido, and Shane Douglas. Sometimes Taz is a bit too tough for his own good."

*Former WCW TV and World tag team champion Paul Orndorff retired from active competition after suffering a neck injury in December 1995.*





By Mike Quackenbush

# from Bell to Bell

*[Editor's note: Mike Quackenbush, currently a co-holder of both the Pennsylvania Championship Wrestling tag team and six-man tag team titles, files reports every other month on the life of a young wrestler seeking to make an impact on the sport. In this issue he discusses in depth the unusual bond that exists between all independent wrestlers.]*

ONE OF THE bad things about being a professional wrestler is that you generally don't get much time to relax. Yet few feelings are as comforting as the one I experience

whenever I walk into a locker room filled with my partners and friends. More than members of any college fraternity or intramural sports team, professional wrestlers are bound by an unspoken bond. It is a camaraderie that instantly puts us at ease with each other, allows us to let our guards down, and lets us just be ourselves.

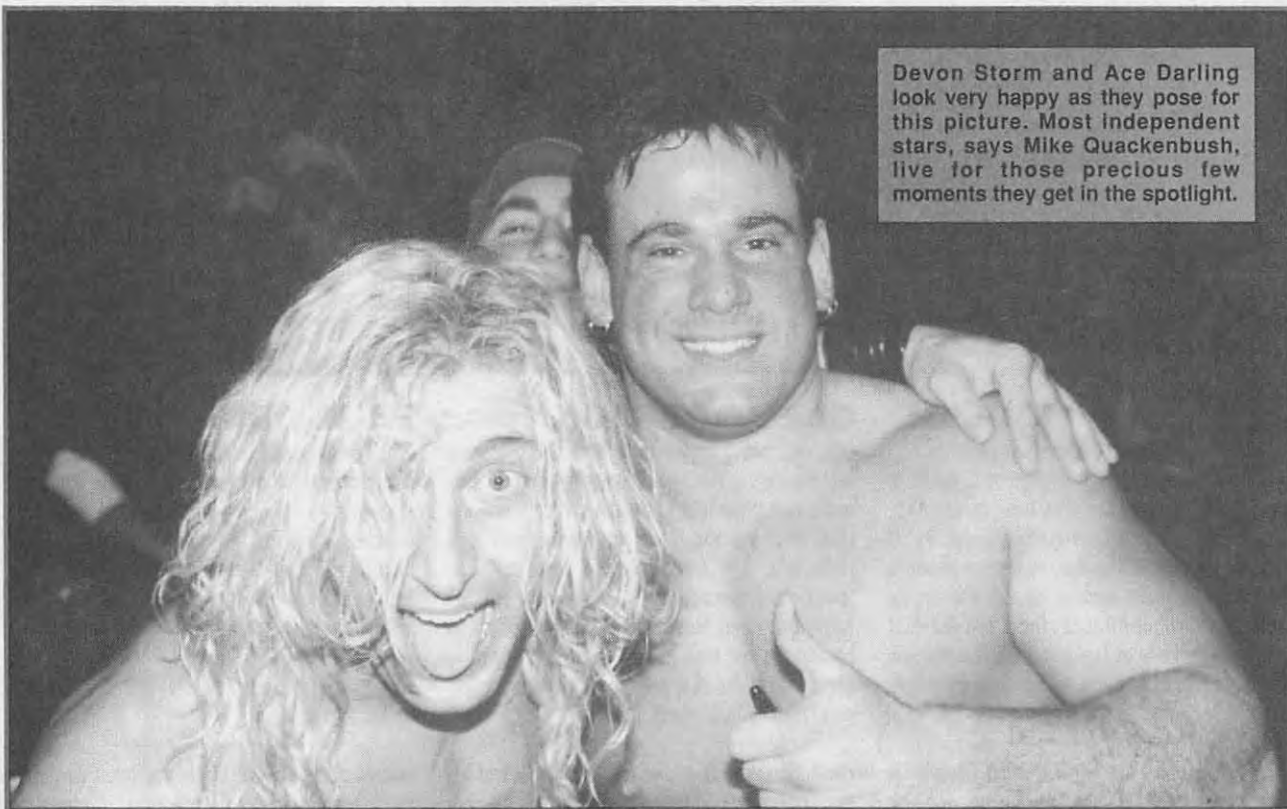
Although there are always wrestlers who don't see eye-to-eye (for any number of reasons), the average independent locker room is a spot to put differences aside.

We aren't simply talking about the guys in the "other locker room" when

we convene for a card. We get a chance to joke around with each other, trade stories of life on the road, and catch up with the people that become, over time, our surrogate family. When you're on the road every weekend, it's comforting to know that regardless of the final destination, there will be a room full of familiar faces waiting for you when you get there.

It's these people—the ones you see week in and week out—that come to be your brothers in wrestling. And it's not simply because these men are your tag team partners and cronies.

Is it because you trust these men to



Devon Storm and Ace Darling look very happy as they pose for this picture. Most independent stars, says Mike Quackenbush, live for those precious few moments they get in the spotlight.

watch your back? Maybe.

Is it because these men have helped you out of a predicament in the ring? Maybe.

Mostly, though, these men come to be your brothers because they share with you the unique, wonderful, and bizarre experience that is professional wrestling.

We are bound by a certain common area of knowledge that very few people in the world can ever understand. We all share in the thrill of victory or poetic justice, and we all know the feelings of betrayal or defeat. We can all laugh at stories of mishaps and practical jokes and marvel at each other's accomplishments and amazing feats. We can appreciate these things because we have all experienced the same kinds of things first-hand.

There is one thought that underscores the idea of brotherhood amongst wrestlers. Simply put, wrestlers who have a true passion for their craft only really feel like they are living life to the fullest when they are in the ring. Somehow, those of us who do it all for the thrill of the match only feel alive when we climb through the ropes to the approval (or disapproval) of the fans. We live our lives in anticipation of the next time we can spend just a few moments in the spotlight, competing in the grandest sport of all.

It is for those few minutes that we are willing to spend countless hours driving from state to state and willing to sacrifice time with our real families and our friends.

No athletes in the world work as hard for as little as independent wrestlers do. We log hundreds, sometimes thousands, of miles to put our safety and well-being on the line. We are compensated with a small fraction of the profits our matches produce and are frequently insulted and put down by self-styled "critics" who can barely grasp the smallest iota of what we endure. We allow ourselves to be exploited and justify it to ourselves as the price we pay to pursue our dreams.

Every athlete on the independent scene has withstood some form of



Why do indy wrestlers such as APW's Erin O'Grady and Donovan Morgan keep giving their all night after night even though they know the chances of any young wrestler making it big are remote? There are many, many reasons why.

mistreatment or abuse because he felt it would help him on the way to realizing his dreams. Not everyone in wrestling is out to win a belt or have the likeness of his face printed on a T-shirt. Some wrestlers do it for the chance to be the center of attention. Some do it for the money. Some for the acclaim.

Maybe there are those who wrestle because they want to be a role model for others, and maybe there are those who don't know anything else but wrestling. Whatever the reason, we are brought together to satisfy a need we all have—a need to entertain and compete.

When we are all together in the locker room, though, it is our differ-

ences that make us individuals and the similarities that make us brothers. We hail from all walks of life and come from all sorts of backgrounds, yet we are bound by common experiences, goals, and dreams. Not just anyone has what it takes to become a professional athlete, and no one knows it better than the stars of the independent scene.

I think we all take a certain measure of comfort in surrounding ourselves with others who have also forsaken most semblances of a normal life to reach toward the big time. It is this comfort, coupled with the trust of our friends and the respect of our peers, that turns a group of so-called "independents" into a brotherhood. □



# Spotlight N...

## JUNKYARD DOG

**T**RAGIC IS THE only way to describe the recent death of Junkyard Dog, one of professional wrestling's most popular figures. JYD met an untimely end when he crashed his car into a concrete structure near Forest, Mississippi, on June 2, after falling asleep behind the wheel. He was 45 years old.

Sylvester Ritter (JYD's birth name) got his start in professional wrestling after being cut from the Charlotte franchise of the World Football League in 1977. JYD competed in Memphis and Calgary before heading to New Orleans, where he became an instant hit with the fans while wrestling for "Cowboy" Bill Watts' Mid-South Wrestling.

Weighing 260 pounds and capable of bench-pressing more than 500 pounds, JYD was "meaner than a junkyard dog" inside the ring but beloved by the New Orleans fans who cheered his "Big Thump" power-slam and theme song, "Another One Bites The Dust."

But nothing endeared JYD to those fans more than his courageous victory over Michael Hayes at the Superdome on August 2, 1980. Weeks after being attacked by The Freebirds and blinded by a toxic substance, Dog, attached to Hayes by a chain and dog



collar and wearing patches and goggles over his eyes, scored a pinfall victory and was later voted Inspirational Wrestler of the Year.

Junkyard held the Mid-South North American title (four times), American heavyweight title, Mid-South tag title, and the Canadian heavyweight championship before signing with the WWF in 1984.

JYD's tenure in the WWF—during the rock 'n' wrestling era of the mid-'80s—lifted him to worldwide fame.

JYD cartoons and merchandise were everywhere as he was featured on many of the WWF's early supercards and spinoff ventures. He beat Intercontinental champ Greg Valentine by disqualification at the first WrestleMania and was featured on the premiere of NBC's *Saturday Night's Main Event*. JYD battled alongside fan favorites such as Tito Santana, Andre the Giant, and Rick Steamboat against the likes of Terry Funk, Adrian Adonis, and Don Muraco.

However, he never won a title in the WWF and faded out of the national spotlight after losing to Harley Race at WrestleMania III on March 29, 1987.

Dog resurfaced in 1991 and battled WCW champ Ric Flair during his stint in that federation (he won the WCW six-man tag title with Tommy Rich and Rick Morton while there) and won the USWA title from Eddie Gilbert in 1992. Though he wrestled occasionally on the independent circuit right up until the time of his death, the USWA belt was the last major title he would hold. He did make an appearance on May 3 at ECW's *Wrestlepalooza* pay-per-view in Marietta, Georgia, where he was honored by ECW as a hardcore legend. We honor him now in our "Spotlight."

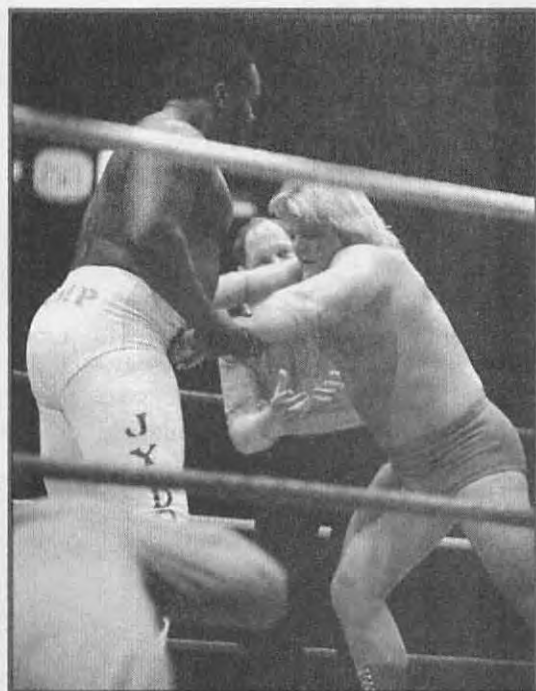


October 1983: Junkyard Dog applies a chinlock on AWA champ Nick Bockwinkel. Although JYD often beat his opponents within minutes, the cagey Bockwinkel proved to be a much greater challenge.

August 1980: Though still blinded from a heinous assault by Michael Hayes, Junkyard Dog challenged the Freebird to a dog-collar chain match within a cage. In what will be remembered as the most courageous effort in the sport's history, JYD pinned Hayes in 11:20.



April 1983: Fans in New Orleans knew about JYD's "Big Thump" powerslam years before he brought it to the WWF. After this match in Houston, Kendo Nagasaki knew about it as well.

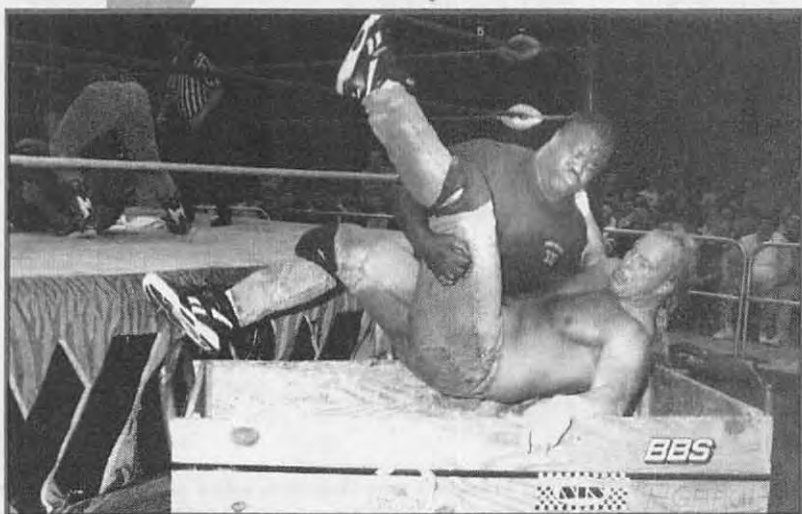


March 1985: JYD puts the squeeze on WWF I-C champ Greg Valentine at the first WrestleMania. Although Junkyard Dog was always immensely popular, he became an international star in the WWF.



January 1984: JYD slugs it out with Butch Reed in a dog-collar match. Jealous that Mid-South fans voted JYD their favorite wrestler, Reed turned against JYD, igniting a bitter feud.

March 1992: JYD dumps Steve Austin into a box during a WCW bunkhouse tag match. WCW was the last stop for Junkyard Dog before he won the USWA title from Eddie Gilbert.





# Scrapbook

Explore with us the rich history of this great sport as we recall the important news stories at five-year intervals dating back a quarter of a century

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER  
1973

**A** WWF RECORD was set when Prof. Toru Tanaka and Mr. Fuji defeated Haystacks Calhoun and Tony Garea for the federation's tag team title in Philadelphia on September 11. The victory marked the first time a team had become two-time champions ... Calhoun was the special referee as WWF titlist Pedro Morales battled George "The Animal" Steele in a cage match in Boston. Despite Steele's use of a foreign object, Morales staggered his bloody rival with punches and walked through the cage door victoriously ... In St. Louis, Harley Race beat Gene Kiniski for the Missouri State title on October 13. This began Race's second reign as state champion; he'd won a tournament in 1972 for his initial title ... NWA President Sam Muchnick announced a number of rule changes that he hoped would make the sport safer. Among them were immediate disqualifications for low blows, striking the referee, and throwing an opponent over the top rope ... Wrestling fans clamored for top con-

tender Chief Jay Strongbow to get a WWF title shot ... Claiming he wanted to personally gauge the effectiveness of the sport's most dangerous maneuver, Senior Editor Bill Apter was a willing victim of Stan Stasiak's heart punch. After Apter had been rushed to the hospital, Stasiak said, "Of course I didn't punch him as hard as I can. The last thing I need on my hands is a dead reporter." Apter was held overnight for observation and released the next day ... In Los Angeles, fans watched on TV as Dr. Bernhardt Schwartz stitched Victor Rivera's face after a match with "Maniac" John Tolos.

NWA RATINGS: 1—Jack

Brisco; 2—Harley Race; 3—Terry Funk; 4—Dory Funk Jr.; 5—The Sheik; 6—Bruno Sammartino; 7—Lou Thesz; 8—Johnny Valentine; 9—Pat Patterson; 10—Bobby Shane.

AWA RATINGS: 1—Verne Gagne; 2—Superstar Graham; 3—Billy Robinson; 4—Wahoo McDaniel; 5—Ivan Koloff; 6—Crusher; 7—Geoff Portz; 8—Ken Patera; 9—Reg Parks; 10—Larry Heinimi.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Pedro Morales; 2—Chief Jay Strongbow; 3—Blackjack Lanza; 4—Stan Stasiak; 5—Haystacks Calhoun; 6—Tony Garea; 7—Prof. Toru Tanaka; 8—Mike McCord; 9—Mr. Fuji; 10—Manuel Soto.

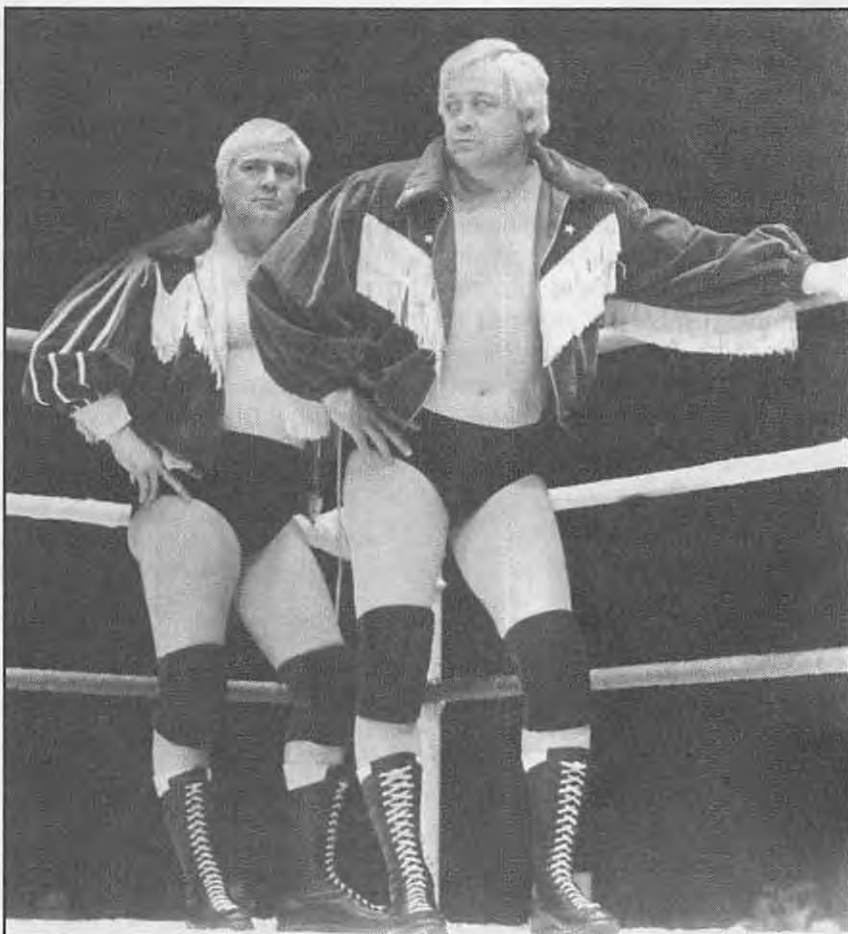


NWA President Sam Muchnick was a busy man during the fall of 1973. He was eager to do as much as he could to make his promotion safer.

**TAG TEAMS:** 1—Killer Brooks & Ben Justice; 2—Prof. Toru Tanaka & Mr. Fuji; 3—Ray Stevens & Nick Bockwinkel; 4—Bruno Sammartino & Edouard Carpentier; 5—The Fabulous Kangaroos; 6—Pak Song & Mr. Wrestling; 7—Rip Hawk & Bobby Shane; 8—Haystacks Calhoun & Tony Garea; 9—Black Gordman & Goliath; 10—Blackjack Mulligan & The Missouri Mauler.

## SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1978

**I**N NEW ZEALAND, Toru Tanaka was disqualified in his bout with Peter Maivia after delivering a low blow ... Tully Blanchard, son of former wrestler and promoter Joe Blanchard, entered the pro ranks after finishing his studies at West Texas State University ... Dusty Rhodes, another West Texas State graduate, was ranked in both the WWF and the NWA. He managed to unmask The Golden Terror before 20,000 at Madison Square Garden ... Brash newcomer Adrian Adonis challenged fans to pin his shoulders to the mat for a \$5,000 prize ... Wahoo McDaniel campaigned for both the NWA and AWA World titles ... Rocky Johnson and The Sheik battled to a gruesome double-disqualification in Chattanooga, Tennessee ... Ivan Koloff held an impromptu press conference in his hotel room to announce that Mr. Wrestling II was indeed Bob Backlund; he was, of course, wrong ... Ernie Ladd returned to the WWF not to challenge Backlund for the federation's World title, but to battle former nemesis Bruno Sammartino ... AWA officials caught Bobby Heenan handing World champion Nick Bockwinkel a foreign object and levied a strong fine ... Greg Gagne and Jim Brunzell were stripped of the AWA tag team title after Brunzell broke a leg in a charity softball game. The belts were awarded to top contenders



Pat Patterson and Ray Stevens got their hands on the AWA World tag team belts in the fall of 1978, but they didn't have to do much to get them.

Pat Patterson and Ray Stevens.

**NWA RATINGS:** 1—Harley Race; 2—Dusty Rhodes; 3—Rick Steamboat; 4—Ric Flair; 5—Jack Brisco; 6—Ken Patera; 7—The Spoiler; 8—Dick Slater; 9—Dory Funk Jr.; 10—Bruiser.

**AWA RATINGS:** 1—Nick Bockwinkel; 2—Verne Gagne; 3—Ray Stevens; 4—Billy Robinson; 5—Crusher; 6—Bob Orton Jr.; 7—Jim Brunzell; 8—Greg Gagne; 9—Larry Hennig; 10—Mighty Igor.

**WWF RATINGS:** 1—Bob Backlund; 2—Ivan Koloff; 3—Dusty Rhodes; 4—Superstar Graham; 5—Victor Rivera; 6—Dino Bravo; 7—Luke Graham; 8—Ivan Putski; 9—Spiros Arion; 10—Stan Stasiak.

**TAG TEAMS:** 1—Baron Von Raschke & Greg Valentine; 2—The Yukon Lumberjacks; 3—Ray Stevens & Pat Patterson; 4—Paul Jones & Rick Steamboat; 5—Jack

& Jerry Brisco; 6—Mr. Sato & Mr. Saito; 7—Greg Gagne & Jim Brunzell; 8—Steve Keirn & Mike Graham; 9—Blackjack Lanza & Bob Orton Jr.; 10—Chavo & Hector Guerrero.

## SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1983

**O**NE OF THE most controversial managers in wrestling history, The Grand Wizard, died on October 12 ... Shortly after winning the Georgia title from Larry Zbyszko, Brett Wayne revealed that Buzz Sawyer was his brother ... Bob Orton and Dick Slater collected a \$25,000 bounty from Harley Race for attacking Ric Flair and putting him in the hospital. Flair later announced via videotape that his injuries were forcing him to retire, but it was a ploy; he ran from the dressing



room swinging a baseball bat at Orton and Slater during their tag team match ... Flair also traveled to Puerto Rico and nearly defeated Pedro Morales for the WWC North American title ... The Florida title changed hands three times in three days: Barry Windham beat Jos LeDuc in Sarasota on September 17, LeDuc regained it in Orlando on the 18th, and Windham got it back in West Palm Beach on the 19th ... Blackjack

Lanza had a falling-out with his manager, Bobby Heenan, after Heenan accidentally hit Lanza with brass knuckles during a match against Greg Gagne ... Jimmy "Superfly" Snuka wrestled two matches in one night in St. Louis, Missouri. In a tag team confrontation, he teamed with Dick the Bruiser to face Killer Karl Krupp and Blackjack Mulligan; in a singles match, his opponent was Roger Kirby. During both matches

Snuka performed the "Superfly" leap, and both times he was disqualified; the move was illegal in Missouri at the time.

**NWA RATINGS:** 1—Harley Race; 2—Greg Valentine; 3—David Von Erich; 4—Barry Windham; 5—Brett Wayne; 6—Rufus R. Jones; 7—Mike Rotundo; 8—Ric Flair; 9—Tommy Rich; 10—David Shultz.

**AWA RATINGS:** 1—Nick Bockwinkel; 2—Hulk Hogan; 3—Mad Dog Vachon; 4—Rick Martel; 5—Brad Rheingans; 6—Mr. Saito; 7—Ken Patera; 8—Billy Robinson; 9—Greg Gagne; 10—David Shultz.

**WWF RATINGS:** 1—Bob Backlund; 2—Masked Superstar; 3—Don Muraco; 4—Jimmy Snuka; 5—Sgt. Slaughter; 6—Tito Santana; 7—Iron Sheik; 8—Tony Atlas; 9—Rocky Johnson; 10—Ivan Putski.

**TAG TEAMS:** 1—Jack & Jerry Brisco; 2—Ken Patera & Crusher Blackwell; 3—The Road Warriors; 4—The Freebirds; 5—Elijah Akeem & Kareem Muhammad; 6—The Samoans; 7—Butch Reed & Jim Neidhart; 8—Steve Keirn & Stan Lane; 9—The Masked Medics; 10—Rick Steamboat & Jay Youngblood.

If Jimmy Snuka would have stuck to using headlocks against Roger Kirby during a 1983 match in St. Louis, he might have had a chance to defeat him.



## SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1988

**T**HE SAMOAN SWAT Team lost the World Class tag team title to Steve Cox and Michael Hayes on September 16—then regained it three days later ... Peter Maivia Jr. and Mando Guerrero, managed by Prof. Toru Tanaka, won the ACCW tag team title from The Lords of Discipline on September 24. On the same card, Mando's brother Chavo won the All-California Championship Wrestling title from "Wildman" Jack Armstrong ... Veteran promoter Leroy McGuirk, a world junior champion in the 1940s, died on September 9 ... Hulk Hogan caused a controversy by wearing a

motorcycle helmet emblazoned with the word "Hulkster" during matches ... The Midnight Express, Stan Lane and Bobby Eaton, defeated Arn Anderson and Tully Blanchard on September 10 to capture the NWA World tag team title. Soon thereafter, Anderson and Blanchard left for the WWF, with Anderson declaring The Four Horsemen's dynasty over ... Midget wrestler Tom Thumb died on October 16 at age 27 following an auto accident ... *Learning The Ropes*, a syndicated sitcom starring Lyle Alzado and featuring prominent NWA stars, premiered ... Tension started to build inside the Hogan-Elizabeth-Randy Savage alliance ... Tom Prichard won the vacant CWF heavyweight title by defeating Tony Anthony in a tourney final on October 3 ... The Road Warriors, managed by Paul Ellering, ended The Midnight Express' short reign as NWA tag team champs on October 29 ... Andre the Giant passed out in fear after Jake Roberts threw his snake, Damien, at him.

**NWA RATINGS:** 1—Ric Flair; 2—Barry Windham; 3—Lex Luger; 4—Sting; 5—Dusty Rhodes; 6—Steve Williams; 7—Nikita Koloff; 8—Mike Rotundo; 9—Rick Steiner; 10—Bam Bam Bigelow.

**AWA RATINGS:** 1—Jerry Lawler; 2—Ronnie Garvin; 3—Kerry Von Erich; 4—Greg Gagne; 5—Wahoo McDaniel; 6—Manny Fernandez; 7—Col. DeBeers; 8—Sgt. Slaughter; 9—Soldat Ustinov; 10—Mando Guerrero.

**WWF RATINGS:** 1—Randy Savage; 2—The Ultimate Warrior; 3—Andre the Giant; 4—Hulk Hogan; 5—Ted DiBiase; 6—Bad News Brown; 7—King Haku; 8—The Honky Tonk Man; 9—Jake Roberts; 10—Brutus Beefcake.

**TAG TEAMS:** 1—The Road Warriors; 2—Demolition; 3—The Midnight Express; 4—Pat Tanaka & Paul Diamond; 5—The Fantas-



Bobby Eaton eventually got the better of Arn Anderson when the two clashed in a tag team match on September 10, 1988. Eaton and Stan Lane beat Arn and Tully Blanchard for the NWA tag belts.

tics; 6—The British Bulldogs; 7—Jacques & Raymond Rougeau; 8—The Hart Foundation; 9—The Samoan Swat Team; 10—The Rock 'n' Roll RPMs.

## SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1993

**S**ID VICIOUS AND Arn Anderson engaged in a bloody brawl at a hotel in Blackburn, England, on October 28. Anderson suffered 20 stab wounds from a pair of scissors and was subsequently suspended by WCW; Vicious received four puncture wounds and was eventually fired ... Shane Douglas won his first ECW heavyweight title after champion Tito Santana failed to appear in Roanoke, Virginia, on September 9 for their title match. Douglas didn't stay on top for very

long, however, as Sabu beat "The Franchise" at the ECW Arena on October 2 ... The Quebecers ended Rick and Scott Steiner's second WWF World tag team title reign by beating the brothers in a match contested under "Province Of Quebec" rules (meaning the belts could change hands on a countout or disqualification) on September 13 ... Lord Steven Regal defeated WCW TV champ Rick Steamboat for the belt at Fall Brawl in Houston on September 19 ... Shinya Hashimoto beat The Great Muta for the IWGP heavyweight title in Nagoya, Japan, on September 20 ... Razor Ramon beat Rick Martel for the WWF I-C belt on September 27 in New Haven, Connecticut, after a 20-man battle royal to determine the top two contenders. WWF President Jack Tunney had stripped Shawn Michaels of the title earlier for "failing to meet certain contractual obligations" ... Terry Funk beat Sabu for the ECW TV title in Philadelphia on October 1 ...

2 Cold Scorpio and Marcus Alexander Bagwell knocked off WCW World tag team champs The Nasty Boys for the title on October 4 in Columbus, Georgia, but lost it back to them on October 24 at Halloween Havoc ... Mexican wrestler Oro suffered a brain aneurysm during a six-man tag match at Arena Coliseo in Mexico City, Mexico, on October 26. The match progressed to the second fall before doctors removed Oro from the ring and pronounced him dead ... The Moondogs and The Dogcatchers continued their seesaw battle for USWA tag team supremacy by trading the belts twice during the week of September 6. Moondog Spike and Mike Anthony put a stop to the lunacy by defeating The Dogcatchers on October 4 in Memphis.

**WCW RATINGS:** 1—Big Van  
(Continued on page 57)



# IN McMAHON AND AUSTIN'S GAME OF MENTAL CHESS



Vince McMahon may have drafted Dude Love as his pawn (left), but after being knocked unconscious during the Over the Edge main event, he found himself forced to declare his own charge a loser at the hands of Steve Austin (below).



Photos by Gary Dineen

**To settle his private  
feud, Vince McMahon  
sent Dude Love out to  
eliminate Steve Austin.  
Instead, Austin  
eliminated Dude  
Love—and McMahon  
may soon find himself  
on the wrong end  
of check**

**By Dan Murphy**

**I**MAGINE, JUST FOR a moment, that you are Vince McMahon. You are the owner of the WWF. You have drawn countless fans to countless arenas from New York to Tokyo to see your athletes in competition. Wrestling legends like Bruno Sammartino, Bob Backlund, Andre the Giant, Hulk Hogan, and Randy Savage have given their blood, sweat, and tears to wear the WWF World championship belt around their waists. And after nearly three years of battling rival WCW in a bitter ratings war, the momentum has swung back in your favor.

When you go to a supermarket in Tallahassee, for crying out loud, the cashier is wearing

a T-shirt with a WWF logo on it!

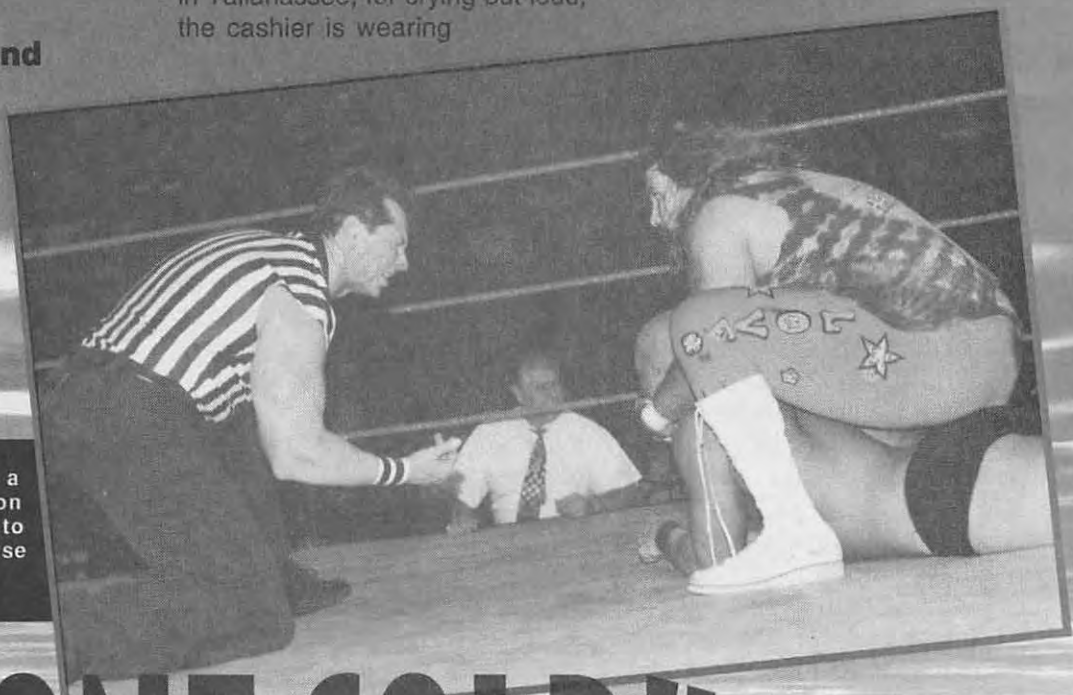
If you were Vince McMahon, you'd be the happiest man alive right?

Maybe not. Because you also have to deal with Steve Austin.

Vince McMahon hates Austin. Prior to WrestleMania XIV, McMahon admitted that Austin as WWF World champion would be "a public relations and promotional nightmare." When Mike Tyson counted Shawn Michaels' shoulders to the mat on March 29, McMahon suddenly realized that his nightmare had become a terrible reality.

When Austin held the WWF belt over his head and drank in the deafening cheers of his legions of

As Love holds Austin in a camel clutch, McMahon takes the opportunity to send a little verbal abuse "Stone-Cold's" way.



# "STONE COLD" TAKES OUT A PAWN





Love tried his best to dethrone Austin; unfortunately for McMahon, best was not good enough and Dude was fired the night after Over the Edge.

fans, McMahon knew he was headed for uncharted waters. Steve Austin is unlikely to be invited to appear on *The Tonight Show*. Don't hold your breath waiting for "Stone-Cold" to emcee the WWF Hall of Fame dinner. Definitely don't expect Austin to dedicate his matches to all his "little rattlesnakes."

The WWF has had its share of rulebreaking champions before, but those were men whose principles made them hated by the fans. Austin, despite (or perhaps, because of) his penchant for beating up referees, using off-color language, and breaking every damn rule he can think of, is the most popular wrestler in the WWF.

What's a beleaguered owner to do?

Wrestling purists often compare the mat sport to a game of chess. For every move, there is a countermove, and a counter to the counter, in the ring and out of it. When Austin claimed the WWF title, McMahon found himself—and the marketability of the WWF—in check. It was time for desperate measures, and McMahon found a suitable pawn.

"Vince McMahon is no dummy,"

Guest ring announcer Pat Patterson tried making a three-count on Dude's behalf, but Austin was able to avoid the loss.

said Gorilla Monsoon. "He knows Austin is a technically strong wrestler, but also that Austin won't back down from an all-out brawl. He knows Austin suffered an almost career-threatening injury when Owen Hart piledrived him last year, and he

understands the mental framework of a man who has endured that kind of near-tragedy. When you think about it, Dude Love was a perfect wrestler for him to send after Austin."

In Dude, McMahon found a bloodthirsty brawler he could mold into an adequate WWF champion. Maybe he is no matinee idol, but Mick Foley is a man who has waited his entire life to be accepted by the public, to achieve the ultimate glory in wrestling. All McMahon had to do was whisper in his ear.

"Beat Steve Austin and I will make you the biggest star in this business."

"All the girls will want to meet Dude Love."

"He's injury-prone, Mick. By putting him out of this business, you can rule the world."

After suffering through a long feud with The Undertaker and meaningless tag team matches with Terry Funk, Foley was pushed to the breaking point by those empty promises. Sure, Dude would probably lose the belt quickly. *Fine*, McMahon thought, *as long as Austin is out of the picture*. Then the WWF would have a public-friendly fan favorite champion or a rulebreaking champion the fans would pay to see get beaten on by fan favorites. White pawn takes black bishop; it's a whole new game.

Only it didn't work that way.

To ensure his pawn's success, McMahon called on some old friends for Austin and Love's clash at Over the Edge. Former Intercontinental champ Pat Patterson served as ring announcer, Jerry Brisco as guest timekeeper. To guarantee success (or so he thought), McMahon declared himself special referee.

Even with everything in Dude's favor, Austin came out angry, loose, and ready for a fight. Even when Patterson changed the rules midstream, making the match first a no-disqualification match, then a falls-count-anywhere bout, Austin continually held the advantage





Both Patterson (above) and Jerry Brisco (below) were victimized by The Undertaker's choke-slam when they made an effort to help McMahon accomplish his mission for the night.



Austin foil the attack, he also forced an unconscious McMahon's hand to the canvas to make the three-count to end the contest.

"I bet McMahon's surprised that a redneck out of Victoria, Texas, outthought his silver spoon-eatin' hide in a chess game," a sweat-soaked Austin laughed after his defense against Love. "But I'm a helluva lot smarter than Patterson, Brisco, and that long-haired freak Dude Love. Maybe McMahon wants to think of this as a game of chess, but I never really gave a damn about chess. There are a few other games I like to play, but fact is I win 'em all!"

To McMahon's dismay, Austin was a convincing winner. And, as Austin later said he suspected would happen, he fired Dude Love, which forced Foley to revert back to his Mankind persona.

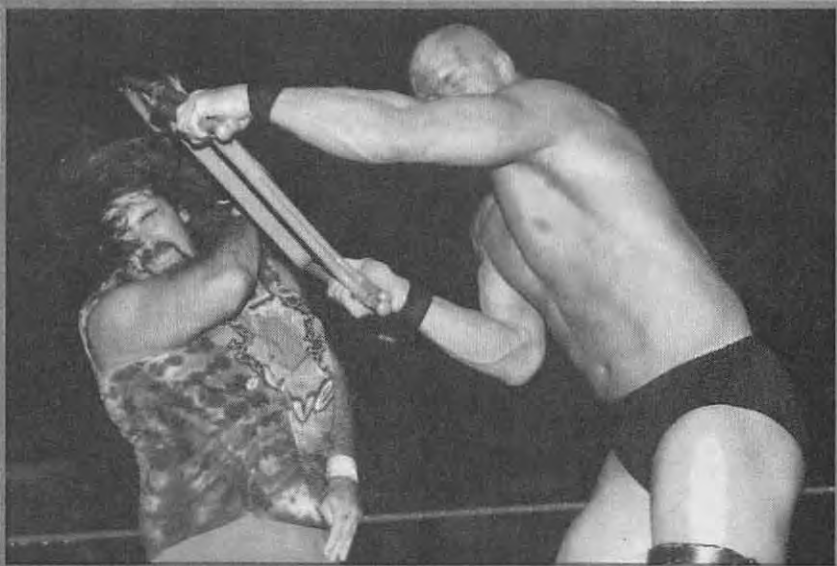
"Austin may have won the battle, but don't count Vince out of the war yet," cautioned broadcaster Kevin Kelly. "There are dozens of other top wrestlers that will help McMahon if given the right incentive."

Austin has taken McMahon's pawn, but there are plenty of pieces remaining on the board. Even the rookie chess player understands that to win the game, you must look many, many moves ahead.

And McMahon is a superb chess player. □

over a hungry Dude Love.

Though Dude pushed the champion to the outermost limits of his abilities, opening a nasty cut on Austin's forehead and bruising him with punches, kicks, and slams, Austin was able to claim the win (thanks in small part to The Undertaker, who choke-slammed both Patterson and Brisco when they tried take over as referee when McMahon was knocked out). Indeed, not only did



When the brutality of Austin vs. Love came to an end, Austin still had his title ... and McMahon still had a huge problem on his hands.





# DEMONS BE DAMNED!

## Sting Makes The Giant See Red!

As a proud member of NWO Wolfpac, Sting is relishing his opportunity to get back into fighting form at the expense of The Giant. He's not the least bit intimidated by the prospect of facing him now.

**In 1996, Sting couldn't buy a win against The Giant. Two years later, both men have changed dramatically—and the match outcomes have changed as well. All the money in NWO Hollywood can't buy a win for The Giant these days**

**By Steve Anderson**

**W**RESTLING EXPERTS will probably forever analyze the whys and the wherefores in the transformation of Sting. What caused his startling metamorphosis? Was it a single event or a series of occurrences that caused the flamboyant, colorful star to turn so brooding and dark?

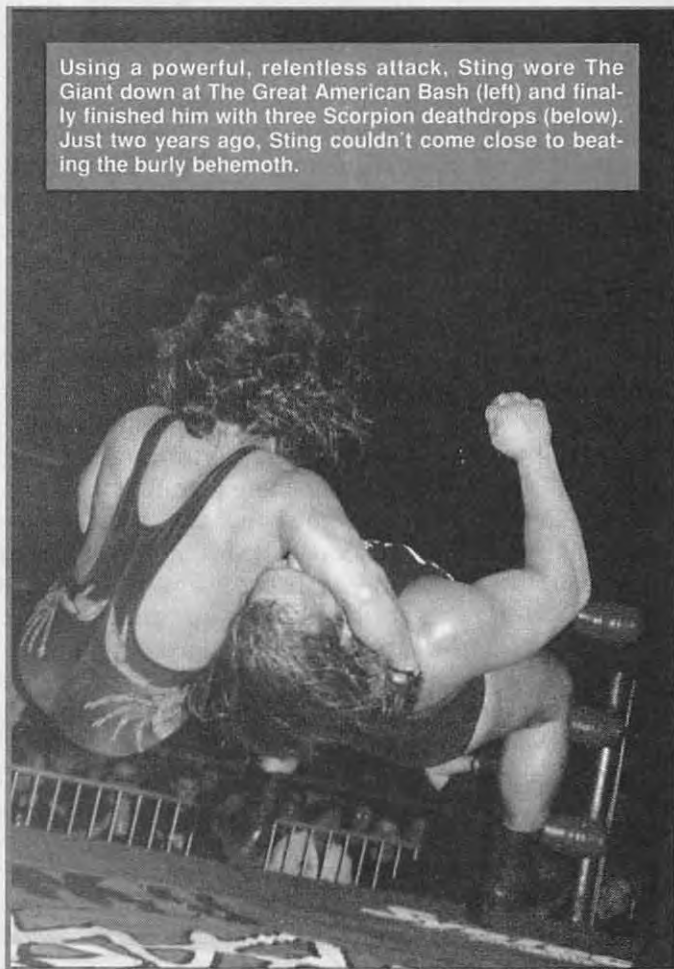
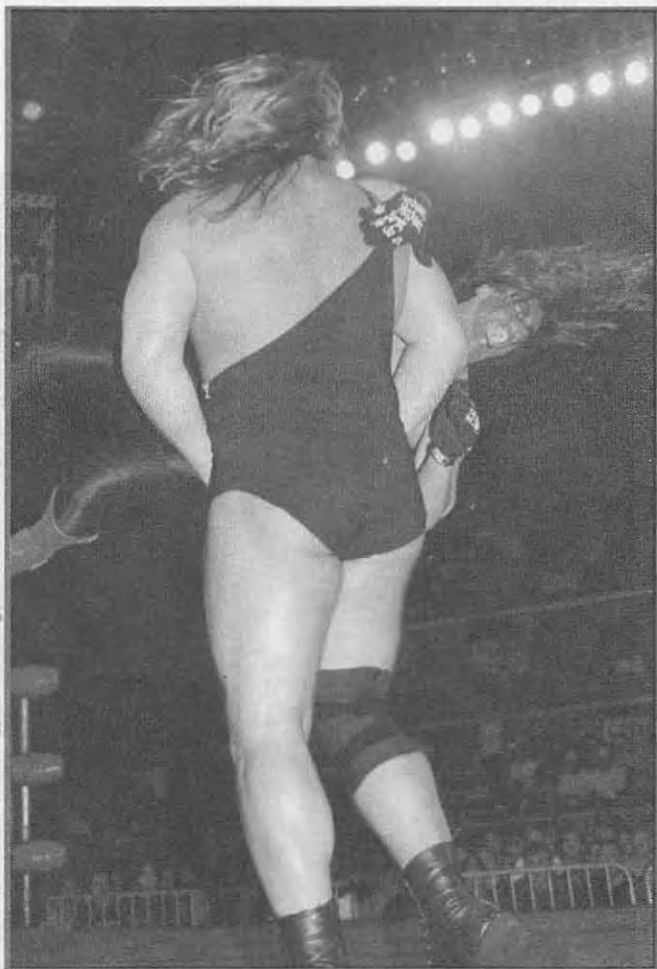
What we do know is 1996 was a tough year for Sting. His character was challenged with the infamous NWO Sting debacle in September, but there was probably more that led to a 12-month period he would just as soon forget. Rewind to the spring of 1996: While Kevin Nash and Scott Hall were fanning the initial flames of war, Sting was doing battle with then-WCW World champion The Giant.

"He was terrorizing everyone,"

recalled a now-vocal Sting. "He was this huge rookie with raw skills. I thought I could stop him. Maybe I underestimated his power and skill back then."

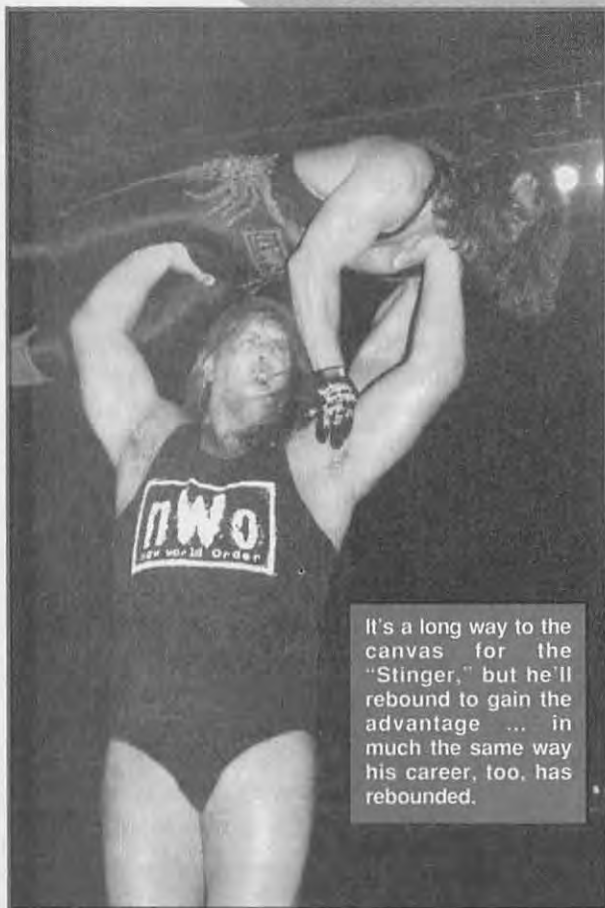
Yes, to say the least. The rookie clearly had the veteran's number. Though he tried his best, Sting couldn't gain an upper hand against the behemoth. Match after match saw The Giant victorious with a crushing choke-slam and leaving Sting looking up at the lights. Title match or non-title match, the outcome was the same. The Giant was building a career and a reputation at the expense of the "Stinger."

The string of losses chipped away at Sting's confidence and overall mental stability. He was haunted by the young wrestler who was handily beating him night after night. He began to doubt himself. The NWO war was getting started, but Sting was distracted.



Using a powerful, relentless attack, Sting wore The Giant down at The Great American Bash (left) and finally finished him with three Scorpion deathdrops (below). Just two years ago, Sting couldn't come close to beating the burly behemoth.





It's a long way to the canvas for the "Stinger," but he'll rebound to gain the advantage ... in much the same way his career, too, has rebounded.

glad that The Giant was no longer an opponent who could possibly take away any momentum he had regained since Starrcade '97.

Sting validated his commitment to The Giant when he agreed to be his partner in a match against then-WCW World tag team champions Scott Hall and Kevin Nash at Slamboree. One week before the scheduled bout, The Giant shockingly switched allegiances back to the NWO (NWO Hollywood, to be specific)—a move that didn't impact the team's success, as they still won the belts. Afterward, Sting had to make the difficult choice to switch alle-

giances as well.

"At first, Sting was glad to be at The Giant's side, because it simply meant that he wouldn't have to face him again," confided a source close to Sting. "While he was at his side, he could keep the demons, if that's what you want to call them, in check. But that all changed when The Giant jumped back to Hogan's group."

Sting had every opportunity to join his partner in NWO Hollywood. The Giant wanted him. So did Hollywood Hogan and Eric Bischoff. However, The Giant's invitation was starting to have

a reverse effect on the "Stinger." A year of inactivity and a few months in which he seemed to lack direction all came into focus when The Giant flashed a black-and-white T-shirt in front of his eyes.

Sting realized that he needed to conclusively face his fears. He needed to wrestle The Giant again and find a way to beat him. However, he couldn't do it as a WCW loyalist. He needed to do something a little bolder to really grab The Giant's attention. After all, almost everyone *expected* Sting to play it safe and stay with WCW. He decided to spit in The Giant's face.

"Sometimes extreme situations call for extreme measures," said Sting. "If I was to get that big goof's attention, I needed to become his mortal enemy. Opportunity knocked, and when I opened that door, all I saw was the red and black of NWO

Ensnaring The Giant in the Scorpion deathlock is for some reason a lot easier for Sting today than it was in 1996. The "Stinger's" career rebirth seems complete.



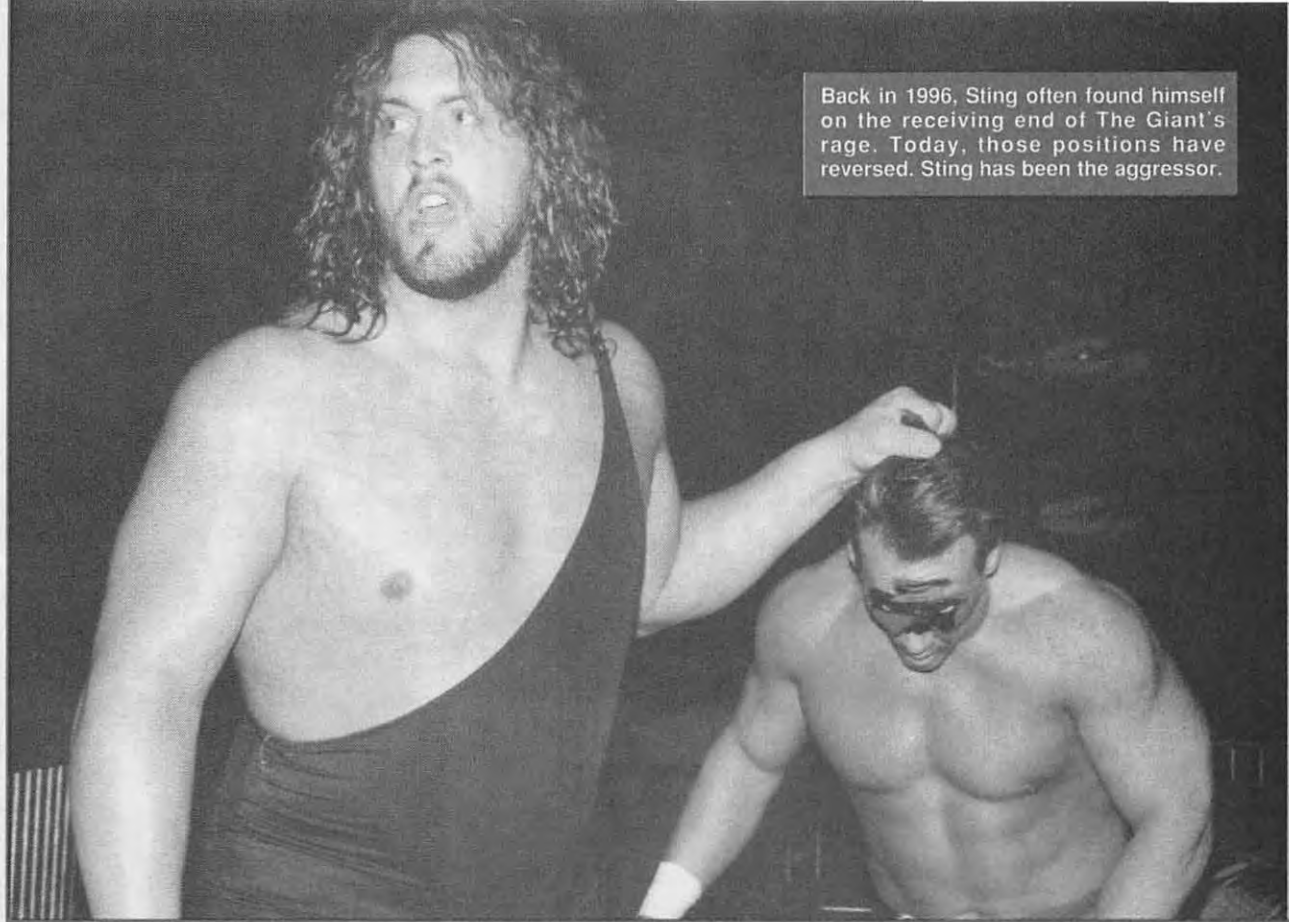
While he still had a demon to exorcise, he was drafted into battle against the nefarious insurgency.

Revenge against The Giant would have to wait.

"Sting was just waiting for the first opportunity to forget me," said The Giant, "but I was in his every thought. I was in his nightmares. You can never escape someone this big."

But the WCW-NWO war pushed Sting into a self-imposed exile. From the rafters, he watched most of the battles being fought. In particular, he watched The Giant join the NWO ... and then leave the group a few months later. Every time he saw his foe, the bad memories would emerge. Sting was living a nightmare in more ways than one.

When Sting finally returned to active competition, he found himself side by side with his former foe. He was willing to put aside the past in an effort to join forces with his new ally. In a way, Sting was



Back in 1996, Sting often found himself on the receiving end of The Giant's rage. Today, those positions have reversed. Sting has been the aggressor.

Wolfpac. This isn't about WCW loyalty—it's about something I have to do."

A WCW loyalist jumping to any faction of the NWO is big news. When it's Sting, who was an avowed mortal enemy of the organization, heads turn. Especially the head of a certain 7'4" former champion. When he looks, you notice. When he speaks, you listen.

"Don't think for a minute that Sting wants any piece of me," boasted The Giant. "He wants to hide out in some punk pack. He wouldn't stay with WCW because he actually would have had to fight his own battle against me."

Sorry, Giant, but that's just what he did as a member of NWO Wolfpac. He fought the big guy man-to-man, one-on-one. He used three Scorpion deathdrops to beat him at The Great American Bash and has trounced him in rematch after rematch.

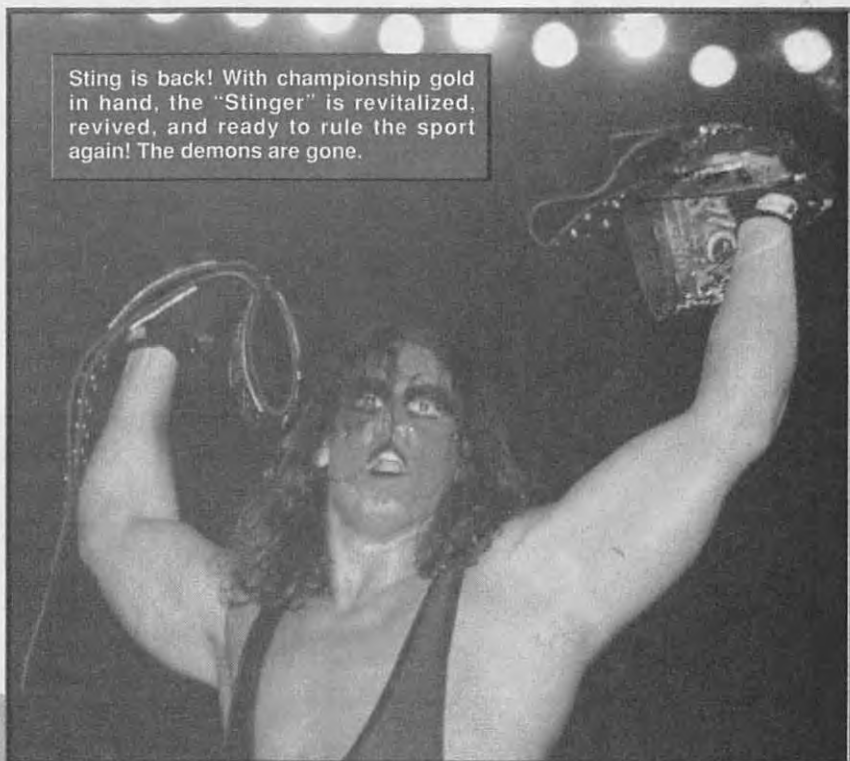
And those pesky demons? Gone *and* forgotten.

For a traumatized Sting, the road to recovery was long and

winding. Ironically, it ended at the doorstep of the NWO, albeit the Wolfpac faction. It became time to take care of some unfinished business with The Giant and

realize that there was nothing to fear but fear itself.

Particularly when that fear is more than seven feet tall and wears black and white. □

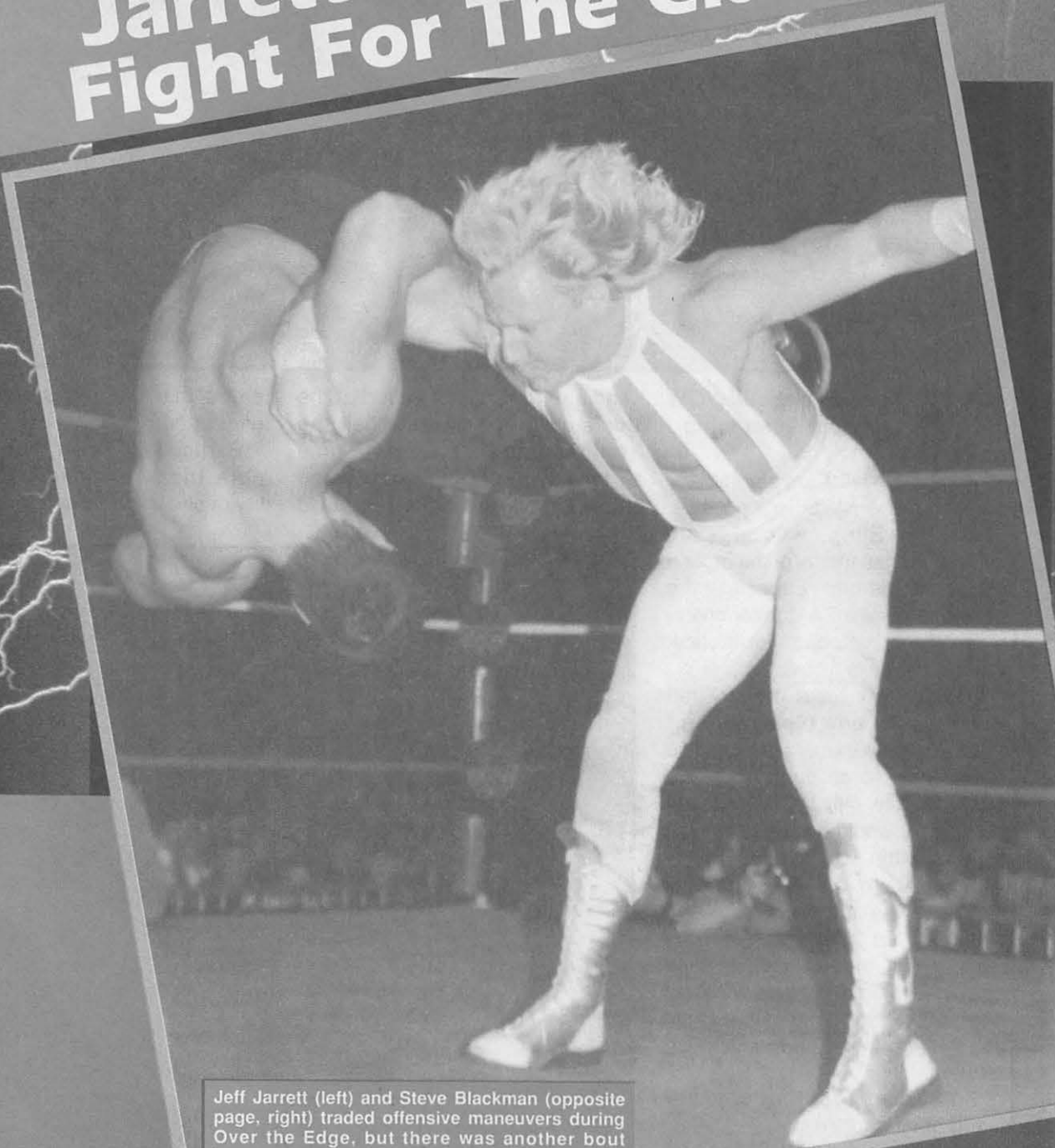


Sting is back! With championship gold in hand, the "Stinger" is revitalized, revived, and ready to rule the sport again! The demons are gone.

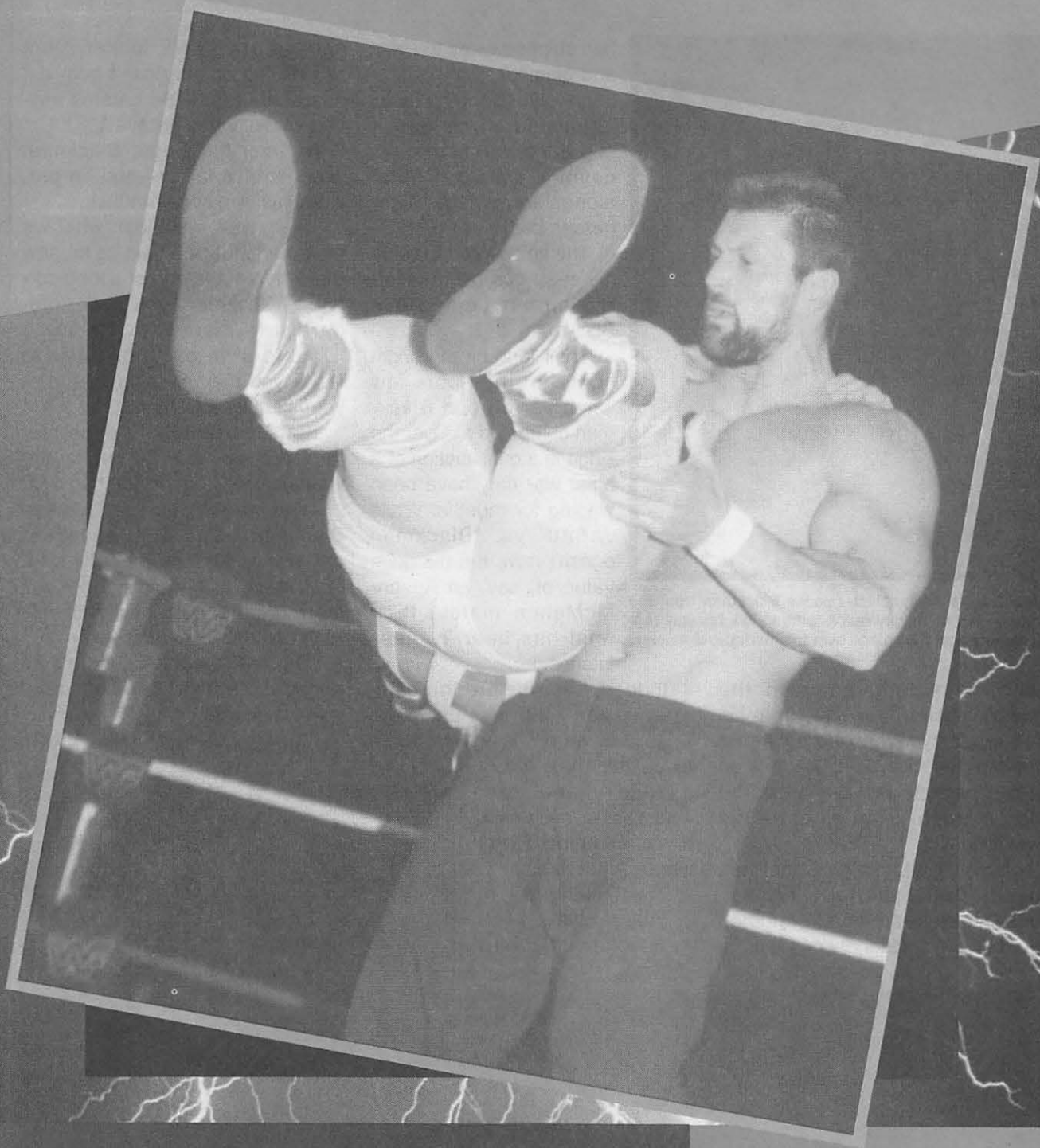


# THE "GREAT" DEBATE

Jarrett & Blackman  
Fight For The Claim!



Jeff Jarrett (left) and Steve Blackman (opposite page, right) traded offensive maneuvers during Over the Edge, but there was another bout between the two before this one: a war of words.



**You can call Jeff Jarrett the mouth that roared, especially given how loudly he roared at Steve Blackman before their bout at Over the Edge. The “Lethal Weapon” did his best to roar back ... but was it enough to be called “great”?**

**By Steve Anderson**

**T**RASH-TALKING IS being seen more and more in nearly every professional sport. Athletes everywhere have deemed it important to gain a verbal advantage to go along with a physical effort. More than ever before, professional wrestlers need to talk the talk even as they walk the walk.

Ever since Jeff Jarrett debuted in the WWF in 1993, he has led





Jarrett isn't too quick to release Blackman from the ropes—but he is very quick to trash-talk his way to a psychological advantage over the martial arts master.

with his mouth, not with the wrestling skills he learned from his father, Jerry. When he assumed the moniker "Double-J," he took on a ring persona that demanded he do as much yapping as he did wrestling.

Jarrett's latest WWF stint has been, to be brutally honest, unspectacular so far. He returned from WCW to tell the world that he

had stripped away the glitz and glamour from his personal style. Months later, he dusted off his garish ring attire to return to his country music "roots" alongside manager Tennessee Lee

The first person to catch his eye since his re-resurrection has been Steve Blackman.

Their feud hit the bright lights of pay-per-view when Jarrett and Blackman competed at Over the Edge in a continuation of a bitter war they have been waging for months. While Jarrett vs. Blackman doesn't have the marquee value of, say, an Austin-McMahon match, their feud has been no less intense.

Indeed, even before the cameras began rolling at Over the Edge, they were waging war. It was a battle that didn't include headlocks, suplexes, or even fists. It was a competition of words. A psych-out.

Trash-talking.  
Yak, yak, yak.  
Anyone within ear-

shot of any WWF locker room around the country can't help but hear Jeff Jarrett. He berates anyone who catches his eye.

At Over the Edge, Blackman was Jarrett's target—and he provided his own counterattack.

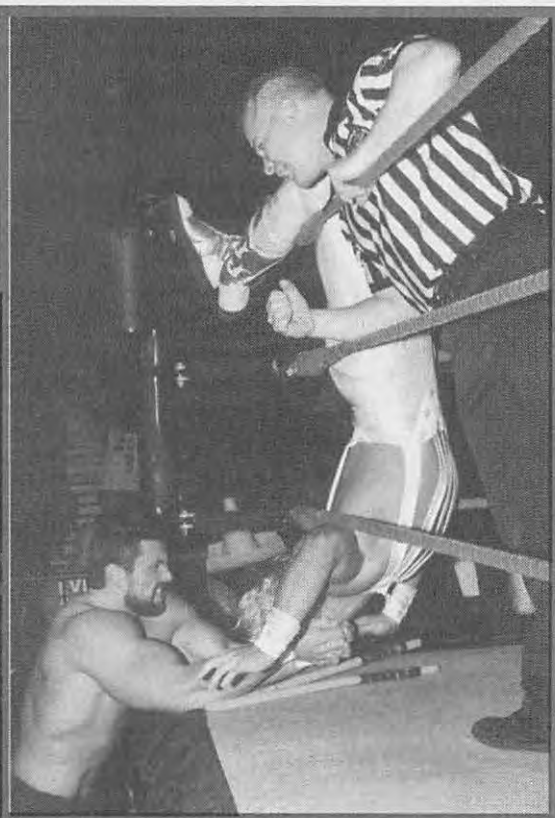
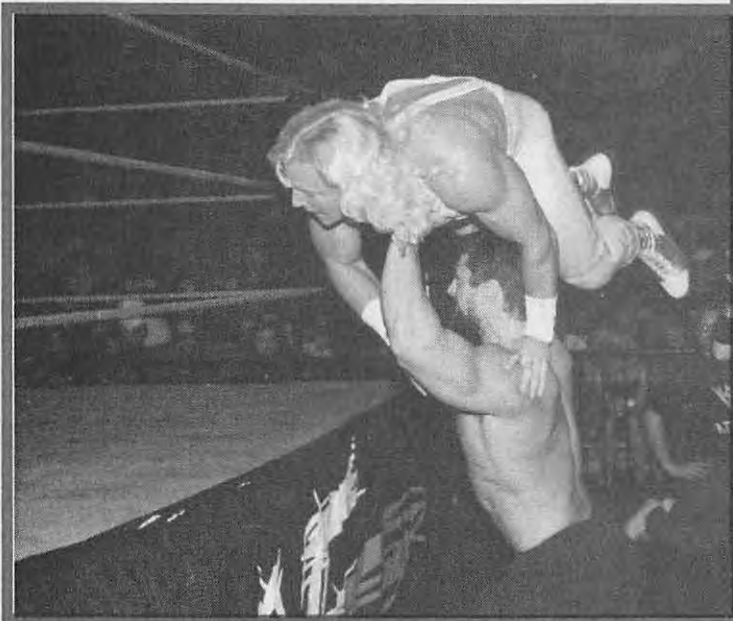
"Well, well, well, look what we have here," Jarrett said as he saw Blackman at the end of a long corridor. "Blackman, you *better* prepare for me, boy. Because 'Double-J' is getting ready to teach you the wrestling lesson of your life. Oh, ain't I great?"

Blackman's steely eyes met Jarrett's as he absorbed every word coming from his foe.

"You want to be great, Steve Blackman? You want people to call you great?" Jarrett continued. "You have to beat *me*. Because there is no one greater than *me*. Ain't that right, Tennessee?"

"Oh, yes, 'Double-J,' there's no doubt about that," Lee concurred with his charge.

"Jarrett, you're all talk," Black-



Blackman would prefer to let his actions speak louder than his words, but he's learning to use both approaches to their fullest advantage.

man, who's not known as a big talker, responded. "You're a guy who talks about upholding tradition, but then you betray it. I've worked hard to learn as much about the martial arts as I possibly can, and all you do is talk. I'm in the gym every day. That's how you become great."

"While you were sitting around hopin' you'd be a star someday," Jarrett responded, "I thrived under the bright lights of Music City USA. 'Double-J' never betrayed tradition. 'Double-J' set his own tradition for others to follow."

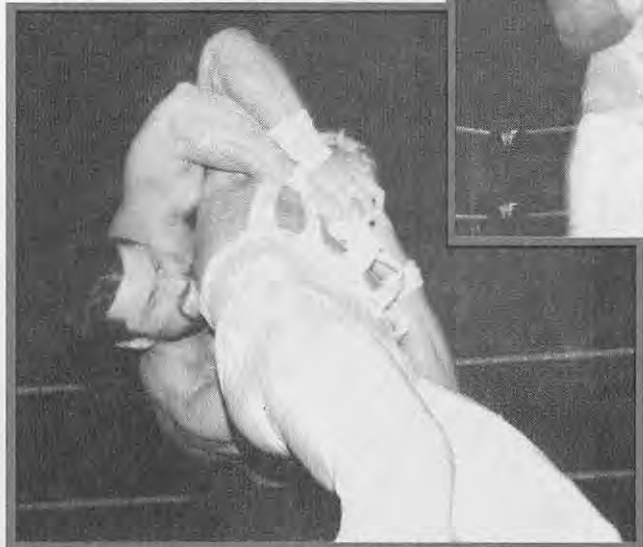
"Blackman, you're scratching and clawing your way up that long ladder to title contention," Jarrett

has to offer. But just consider it on-the-job training every time I whip your butt."

It goes without saying that Tennessee Lee again agreed with his charge. Blackman just turned away without responding. Jarrett

Now it's time for bigger and better things."

"I am not a steppingstone for Jarrett, and I am not a punching bag for Tennessee Lee," muttered a groggy and frustrated Blackman, who has defeated Jarrett several



When Jarrett tries to use Blackman's martial arts weapon, he finds himself absorbing some painful kicks (above) that lead to yet another possible pinfall (left).

continued. "You want to call yourself 'great,' and you hate that I personify that word. Blackman, if you want to be great, you have to beat me."

"I *will* climb that ladder to the top," Blackman retorted, "and I *will* beat you and anyone like you. All talk and no action, Jarrett. Any man can be beaten, especially someone with a big mouth like yours. I've got the skills to beat you, and you know it."

"I'll grant you this: Every time you wrestle me, Blackman, you become a better wrestler," Jarrett said. "Those fancy martial arts moves will lead you nowhere when it comes to facing a pure wrestler, the very best the world

raised his hands in victory as if he had just triumphed in a hard-fought ring battle.

The verbal altercation was just the prelude to their physical war. Blackman shocked Jarrett by displaying formidable scientific skills to match his martial arts skills. After getting numerous 2½ counts, Jarrett (and Lee, for that matter) couldn't tolerate any more. Using Blackman's own martial arts weapon, Lee waylaid Blackman, allowing Jarrett to easily pin his rival.

"There ain't enough belt left for the notches that I put on from beating Blackman," Jarrett boasted after his win. "You saw what I did to him tonight. I beat him verbally, and I beat him physically. I've brought Blackman to the edge and back.

times since Over the Edge. "My day will come with him. You take Lee out of the picture and Jarrett stands no chance."

Blackman is starting to see some upward mobility in a wrestling career that hasn't always been under the brightest of spotlights. Jarrett has basked under those spotlights from the USWA to the WWF to WCW and back to the WWF. For Jarrett, a feud with Blackman is a tuneup for title matches; for Blackman, his showing in a feud with Jarrett could determine the course of his career.

Blackman is also learning that the battles to be won are more than the ones confined to the squared circle. Physical and mental sharpness may be mandatory for success—but so, too, are debating skills.

These days, there's no argument about that. □



# WWE, WCW, & ECW

Photos by Jeff Chilcote

## By Dave Lenker

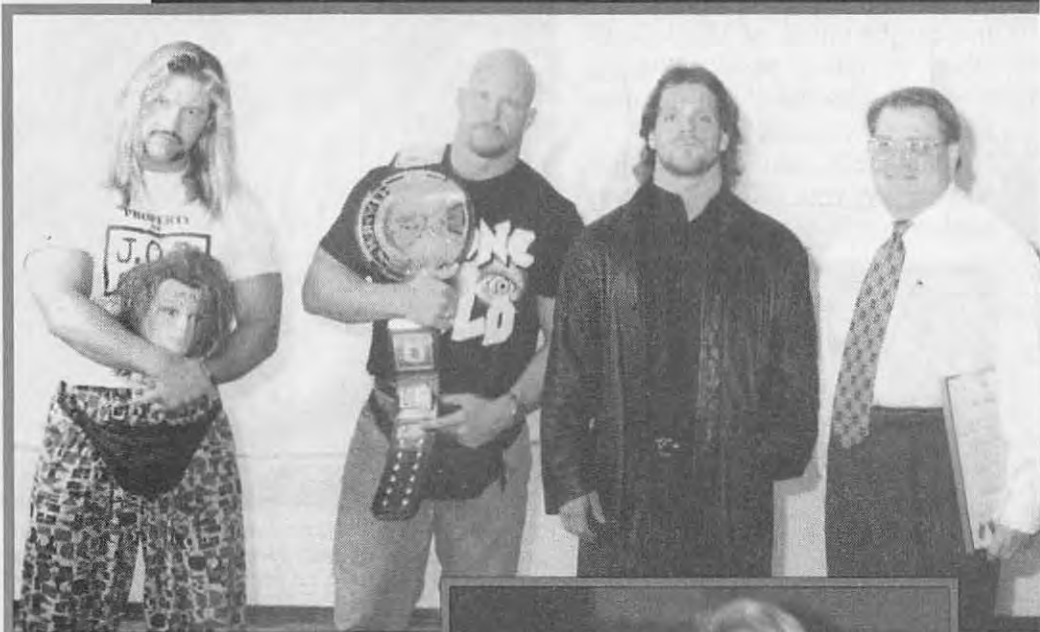
**I**F HE WERE alive today, Brian Pillman probably would have laughed long and hard if you called him a peacemaker. You'd have a hard time finding many wrestlers from *any* era who enjoyed stirring up trouble as much as Pillman did.

But a peacemaker in spirit is exactly what he was on one special night in Ohio. It was on that night, in the gym of the Norwood Middle School—a school Pillman attended in his youth—that the three most prominent wrestling promotions in the U.S. put aside their differences and came together to honor the memory of a man who had touched a lot of people in the WWE, WCW, and ECW so deeply.

Pillman, of course, died suddenly of heart disease at age 35 last October, and though his death hit his fans and fellow wrestlers extremely hard, it absolutely devastated his wife, Melanie, and their five children (Melanie gave birth to another child, Brian's daughter Skylar, the week after this event).

The wrestling community wanted to do something to help her.

Enter former wrestler Les Thatcher, now the director of operations for the Heartland Wrestling Association. He coordinated the



Above, from left to right: ECW's Al Snow (and Head), the WWE's Steve Austin, and WCW's Chris Benoit pose with Joe Hochbein, the mayor of Norwood, Ohio, who proclaimed April 29, 1998, Brian Pillman day in his town.



Brian Pillman's daughter Brittany (shown with Sunny) holds her father's old Cincinnati Bengals jersey, which sold for \$350 at the auction held before the card.

# UNITE FOR A DAY!

## \$23,500 Raised For Pillman Family



From left to right: Brian Pillman's agent, Elliott Pollack, Brian's widow, Melanie, and Les Thatcher, the promoter who coordinated the event, show everyone just how much money was raised via their efforts.

first-ever Brian Pillman Memorial Event. In addition to getting wrestlers from the HWA, the Independent Wrestling Association, Music City Wrestling, Ohio Valley Championship Wrestling, ECW, and WCW to compete on the card, he got WWF champ Steve Austin and WWF manager Sunny to serve as host and hostess for the night's activities.

From 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Austin, Sunny, Chris Benoit, Chris Jericho, Al Snow, and Chris Candido made themselves available to fans (more than 1,000 attended) who

wanted pictures taken for \$10 each (a total of 1,050 photos were taken). Then, about an hour before the opening bout, a special auction was held in which autographed memorabilia, donated by such megastars as Ric Flair, Sunny, Candido, the Hart family, Bill Goldberg, and Cactus Jack, went to the highest bidders. Several wres-

tlers also made brief speeches.

"Of all the projects I've undertaken in over 38 years in pro wrestling, this may be the saddest yet most rewarding," Thatcher wrote in a flyer distributed to fans.

It was also a historic event in which the WWF, WCW, and ECW had no trouble cooperating. Most importantly, though, it was a wonderfully emotional night in which a lot of people got together and raised \$23,500 to help the family of a dear friend who died much too young.

The evening was such a success that Thatcher intends to coordinate another Pillman memorial event during the last week of April in 1999.

### PILLMAN MEMORIAL CARD: COMPLETE RESULTS

Chris Benoit (with Woman) defeated Chris Jericho ... Al Snow defeated Chris Candido (with Sunny)... Chip Fairway & Shark Boy (HWA) defeated Sean Casey & Terik the Great (IWA) ... Flash Flanagan (MCW) defeated Bull Pain (IWA) ... Reno Riggins & Steven Dunn (MCW) defeated Brian Taylor & The Bounty Hunter (HWA) ... Nick Dinsmore (OVCW) defeated Trailer Park Trash (OVCW).



# THE MISTERIO

## Rey Jr. Picks The Winner Of His Mask Contest!

**T**HIS WASN'T SUPPOSED to be *that* big a deal. There wasn't even much of a plan to it at the beginning. Late last year, while the staff of **THE WRESTLER** was researching a story concerning Rey Misterio's anxiety over the possibility of being unmasked in the ring, Senior Editor Bill Apter chimed in with an idea.

"This will really be a great story," he said during an editorial meeting. "But maybe we should have a contest with it and give away one of his masks."

"Yeah, and in order to win it, people will have to make a mask of their own and send it in, right?" said Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker. "You're obsessed with these contest things, Bill. You probably think it's a good idea to have Misterio pick the winner himself, right?"

"No, that's ridiculous," replied Apter. "I'm going to be photographing a WCW show next week. I'll talk to Misterio and see what he's willing to do. Remember, the guy gives out a mask to someone in the crowd before almost all of

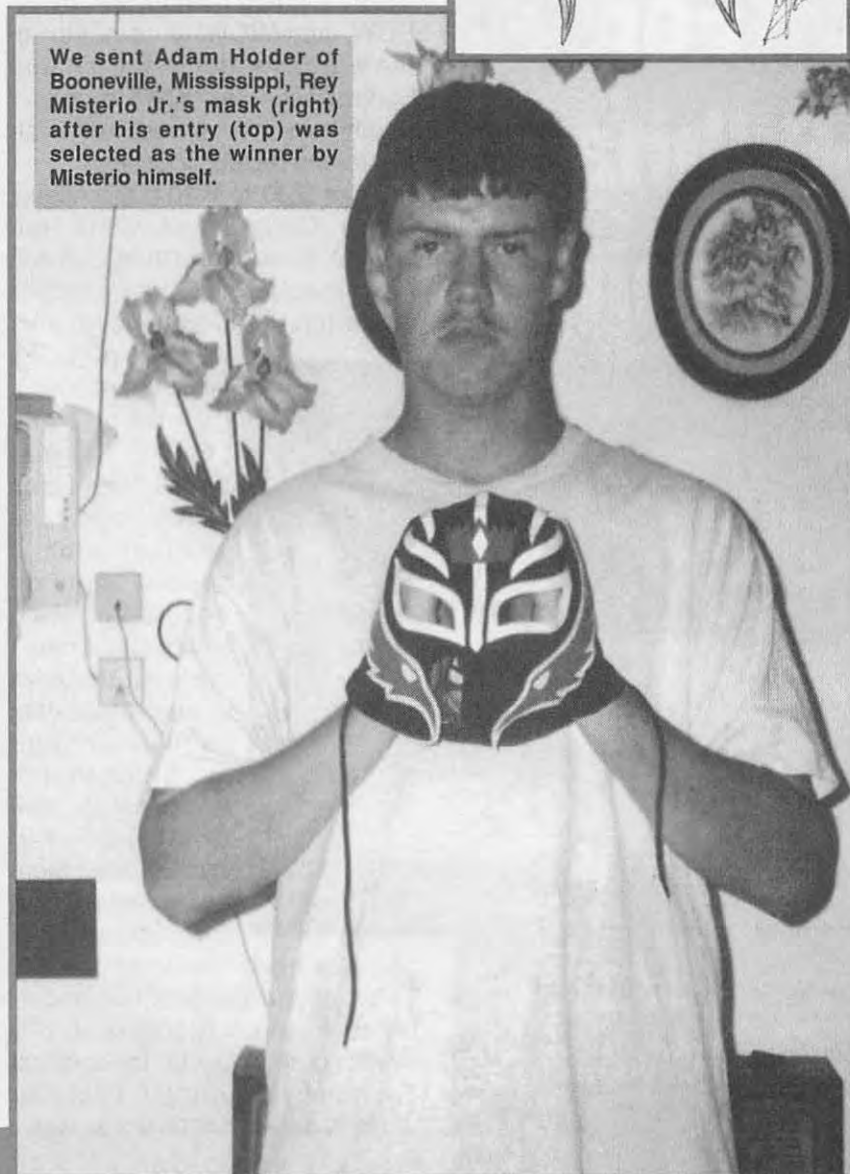
his matches. He really cares about the fans."

So Apter went to that WCW show and caught up with Misterio a few hours before the matches began. As usual, Rey Jr. brought with him an assortment of masks. He was trying to decide which one to wear that night when our senior editor approached him.

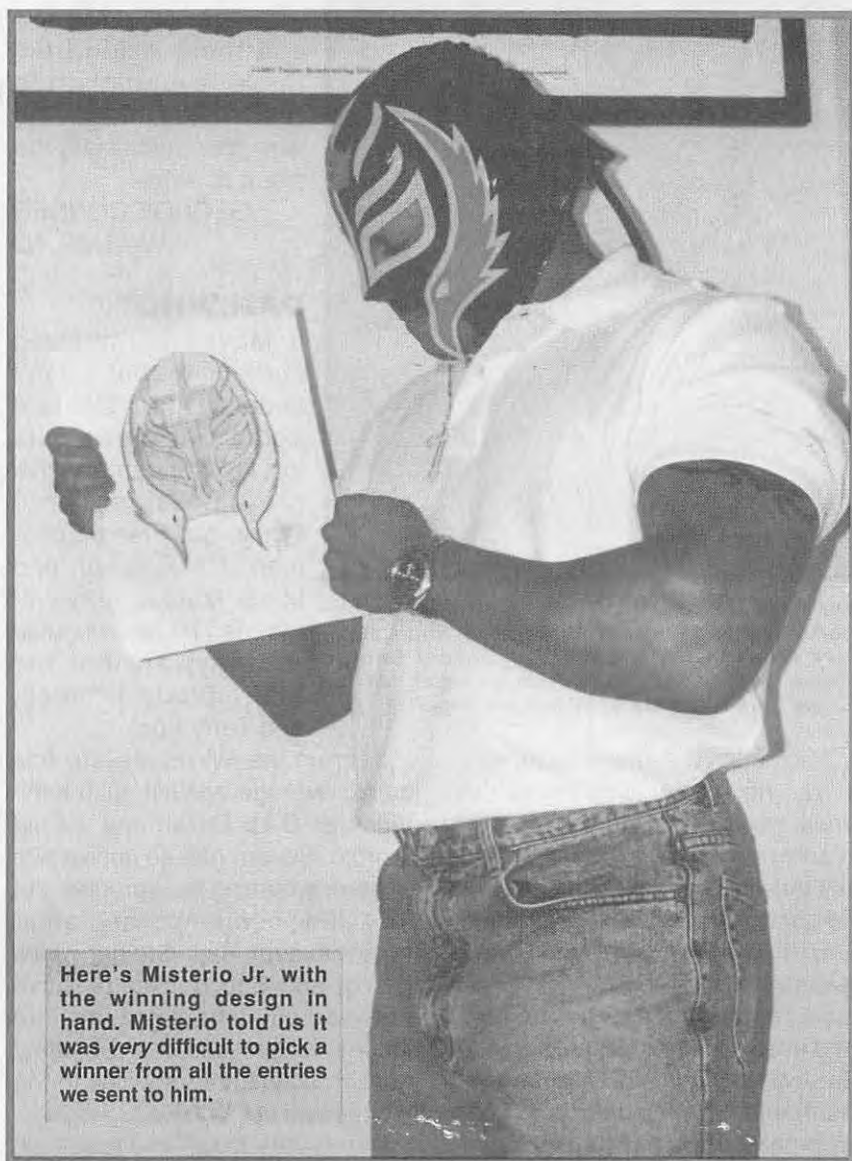
It came as no surprise to Apter



We sent Adam Holder of Booneville, Mississippi, Rey Misterio Jr.'s mask (right) after his entry (top) was selected as the winner by Misterio himself.



# IS OVER



Here's Misterio Jr. with the winning design in hand. Misterio told us it was *very difficult* to pick a winner from all the entries we sent to him.

that Misterio loved the idea. He immediately pulled one of his masks out of his bag and gave it to Bill.

"I really like this one," he said. "It's pretty basic, but it's one of my favorites. The winner should get this one. Maybe you could just have them draw a mask or something."

Good idea, Rey.

So the contest was on. We put a form in the March 1998 issue and simply told you to "get your drawing pencils out (or any other art medium) and design a mask suitable for one of Mexico's proudest Luchadores." Our only other suggestion was to use plenty of colors.

We figured we'd probably get a few hundred entries. Then, once the February 15 deadline came, we'd choose what we thought were the best ones and send them off to Rey, who would select the winner.

Once again, though, we underestimated our readers. We didn't get a few hundred entries. We received a few *thousand*.

Okay, some were more creative than others, but each one showed a lot of effort, and that counts for a lot. Two of the most unusual efforts we saw were the one in which the artist forgot to include holes for Rey's eyes, nose, and mouth on the mask, and the one in which the artist actually sent us a sewn, fabric mask with designs on it.

So we ended up picking our favorite 50 designs and sending them to Misterio, who took his time in looking over all of them. Finally, he called Bill and told him he had reached a decision.

(*Drum roll please ...*) And the winner of the Rey Misterio Jr. mask contest is ... Adam Holder, a 16-year-old wrestling fan from Booneville, Mississippi. We told everyone that Rey Misterio Jr. likes lots of colors in his masks, and Adam's design had lots of colors. So many, in fact, that Misterio would probably have a hard time getting them all on one mask if he ever decided to use Adam's design.

The editors of *THE WRESTLER* would like to thank all those who entered this contest and Rey Misterio Jr. for his time and cooperation. One thing we learned from this whole thing is that Rey has a *lot* of fans out there. □



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## YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 5)



Shawn Michaels and Hunter Hearst Helmsley double-team Mankind. Mankind, Dude Love, and Cactus Jack always wrestle hard, says reader George Conner. He feels Mick Foley deserved better than the "C" we gave him in our WWF Midyear Report.

Mick Foley deserves better than a "C," no matter who he is this week. He puts his body on the line in every single match and tries harder than anyone else in the WWF. He should get an "A" just for effort. The New Age Outlaws have retained the tag team belts longer than anyone thought they would. And even if they do get help from X-Pac and Chyna sometimes, Billy Gunn and Jesse James have beaten plenty of teams with good old-fashioned wrestling. I have to wonder what you people watch on Monday nights when you name LOD 2000 the Tag Team of the Half-Year. Ten years ago, The Road Warriors were the Tag Team of the Decade, but now their mere presence is an insult to wrestling fans.

Sunny is Manager of the Half-Year? Give me a break. LOD 2000 hasn't won anything. I know

he's not very popular, but Jim Cornette has accomplished much more than has Sunny has in the last six months. At least his wrestlers win every now and then. Aside from these few points, the rest of the magazine was great, especially the pinup of Sable.

GEORGE CONNER  
Westville, NJ

## DAN WHO?

Maybe I'm missing something, but I don't understand all this fuss about Dan Severn. Is the NWA title really *that* prestigious anymore? Sorry, but Franz Schuman, Rik Ratchet, and Metal Maniac (three of the men he has wrestled recently) are not Ric Flair, Dusty Rhodes, and Terry Funk.

Even in the WWF, Severn has looked average against such luminaries as D-Lo Brown and 2 Cold Scorpio. Severn has an impressive amateur wrestling background, but very few contemporary amateurs—except Rick Steiner, Jack Brisco, and Bob Backlund—have parlayed their background into successful pro careers. Besides, tradition counts for very little in the new "grown up" WWF.

Dan is very tough and rugged in the ring, and I'm sure a match against Severn is no picnic. But I don't think his traditional amateur style will carry him very far in the current WWF.

MANNY FLOWERS  
New York, NY ☐

Send YOUR LETTERS to:  
Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

# WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from page 7)

**Tommy Rich** took some time off from his managerial position in ECW's **Full-Blooded Italians** to help **Flash Flanagan** in his Music City Wrestling war with **Reno Riggins** and **Steven Dunn** ... **The Firm**, a team comprised of **Damien Law** and **Dillon Order**, is feuding with **Danny B. Badd** and **The Fabulous Rocker** in Mississippi's Southern Championship Wrestling. **Don Bass** and **Blade Boudreaux**,



The WWF's new Giant (above, against Dr. X) hasn't made much of an impact in the WWF yet. Nevertheless, Power Pro Wrestling promoter Randy Hales is convinced that the big man, whom he has dubbed "The Giant King," can help him in his feud with Jerry Lawler (left).

two of the top contenders to the heavyweight title, are also having quite a feud.

Power Pro Wrestling promoter **Randy Hales** has been having problems with **Jerry Lawler** for a long time, and he has finally come to the conclusion that Lawler doesn't deserve to be called "The King" in Memphis anymore. "He's no role model—he's nothing but a lowdown bum!" fumed Hales.

A lot of people probably agree

with him, but Hales isn't just running his mouth. He has plans to do something about Lawler. He is searching for a new "King" and thinks he has found the right man. He's a member of **The Jackyl's** parade of human oddities.

"I have brought in a man who is truly a king, who hovers high above Jerry Lawler and the rest of the world," said Hales. "The WWF has been kind enough to let me contract him for matches here in

Memphis. I am talking about the newest giant sensation, **Paul Silva**. I call him 'The Giant King.'

"Parents, fret no longer. this man is the perfect role model for your children. The lewd, foul-mouthed Jerry Lawler is history here in Memphis. This new giant will see to that!"

We'll see if "The Giant King" will see to that.

That's what's happening. I'll see you at the matches! □





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# NO HOLDS BARRED

(Continued from page 8)

WCW loyalist and punishing one of his arch-enemies?

Speaking of that, case in point number four: Sting beats The Giant at The Great American Bash and is allowed to pick his tag partner to defend the WCW World tag team title. In a shocker, he picks former foe Nash to walk alongside him. One week later, Sting and Lex Luger are permitted to defend the belts.

Wrestling has become so personality- and marketing-oriented that those factors dictate what a promoter will do to sell his product. Sable is good for ratings, so the WWF is not about to banish her. Vader is not Vader without his mask. The Giant is evil, so he deserves to be the victim of an illegal power bomb. Luger and Sting make a great tandem because NWO Wolfpac is so popular right now. Why not let them defend the belts?

Not to sound like Matt Brock, but I remember when Lord Alfred Hays and Bobby Heenan were feuding in the old AWA back in the '80s. The culmination of their feud was a loser-leaves-town match. Hays lost and he left town. The AWA would have enforced the ruling, but it didn't need to. Hays left because he felt obligated to do so, and that was that.

I don't think the consequences would have been the same had Kane lost his mask, or had Mero lost to Sable. If Kevin Nash was still a bad guy, he would still be cuffed and sent away for using yet another power bomb. If NWO Hollywood controlled the WCW tag title, it wouldn't be allowed to name any two of its members champions for a night. The rules are different for different people, assuming there are any rules at all. What must Lord



Despite having lost to Marc Mero at Over the Edge, Sable has been allowed to return to the WWF. Just because Mr. McMahon said so. So much for the stipulation in that match.

Alfred be thinking right now?

Okay, it's easy for him. There is no AWA to come back to now. ☐

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## YOU ASKED US

(Continued from page 16)



Gene Okerlund was quite outspoken after Dean Malenko lost to Chris Jericho at Uncensored, but Malenko's triumphant return has "Mean" Gene eating his words.

should be able to beat him. And by the way, after watching Dean underachieve in four pay-per-view matches in a row, I felt entirely justified in making the comments that I made. However, being the professional that he is, Dean took some time off, rechanneled his ener-

gies, and has come back stronger than ever. I'm glad that he's proving me wrong."

...

Q: "I have a question for Nicole Bass: Nicole, you seem much bigger and stronger than many of the male competitors in ECW. Do you think you are strong enough to beat any of them in

the ring?"—Amy Noble, Harrisburg, PA

A: "Seem bigger and stronger?" the behemoth Bass yelled. "That's because I am bigger

I'm doing a damn good job. Ever see anybody mess with Justin while he's in the ring? No, you haven't. And that's because people know they'll have to answer to me if they do. These guys, and I use the term loosely, are supposed to be hardcore, yet they avoid me—a woman—like the plague. I can beat anyone in ECW—man or woman—and everybody in the company—including Paul E.—knows it. Besides, even if I wanted to climb into the ring with one of these mama's boys, none of them have the guts to get in there with me. But can you blame them? After all, you've seen my physique."

...

Q: "I want to ask Raven this question: How could you let Mortis—or Canyon—psych you out and sneak-attack you time after time? You always talk a good game. But is he beating you at your own game?"—Jose Jimenez, New York, NY

A: "In response to your first question," Raven spat, "I'm not allowing Canyon to attack me, J.J. Dillon is letting him attack me. Dillon was supposed to create a safe working environment for me and The Flock, but as you can see, he failed. He surrounds me with four idiots dressed like riot cops who haven't done one thing to help me. And wouldn't you be 'psyched out' if some big ugly goof turned up everywhere you went and attacked you from behind? And then ran away before you could get a fair shot at him? I'll stand and fight, but Canyon runs away." □



Nicole Bass gives Beulah McGillicutty a taste of her power. A professional bodybuilder, Bass is confident she has enough strength to beat anyone in ECW—male or female—in a fair match.

and stronger than everyone in ECW. In fact, I am big and strong enough to do whatever the hell I want to. But I've been hired to watch Justin Credible's back, and I think

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## SCRAPBOOK

(Continued from page 33)

Vader; 2—Dustin Rhodes; 3—Rick Steamboat; 4—Sid Vicious; 5—Rick Rude; 6—Lord Steven Regal; 7—Cactus Jack; 8—Ric Flair; 9—Sting; 10—Paul Orndorff.



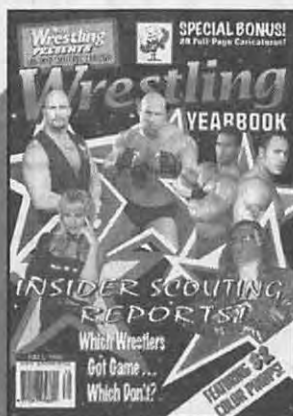
Quebecer Pierre chokes Scott Steiner while Rick Steiner looks on. The Quebecers beat the Steiners for the WWF World tag team belts in September 1993, but only because the match had special stipulations attached to it.

**WWF RATINGS:** 1—Yokozuna; 2—Razor Ramon; 3—The Undertaker; 4—Bret Hart; 5—Lex Luger; 6—Ludvig Borga; 7—Rick Martel; 8—Irwin R. Schyster; 9—Curt Hennig; 10—Jerry Lawler.

**ECW RATINGS:** 1—Sabu; 2—Terry Funk; 3—Jimmy Snuka; 4—Don Muraco; 5—Abdullah the Butcher; 6—Kevin Sullivan; 7—Shane Douglas; 8—Johnny Hot Body; 9—Tommy Cairo; 10—The Sandman.

**TAG TEAMS:** 1—The Quebecers; 2—The Nasty Boys; 3—2 Cold Scorpio & Marcus Bagwell; 4—Rick & Scott Steiner; 5—The Rock 'n' Roll Express; 6—The Heavenly Bodies; 7—Mike Anthony & Moondog Spike; 8—The Headshrinkers; 9—Scott & Steve Armstrong; 10—The Bruise Brothers. ☐

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**Winter 1995: Exclusive Preview: Sting vs. Hogan: This Time It's For Real!** Also: Steiners, Bodies-Cornette, Arn Anderson.  
**March 1996 (Special Issue): 1995—The Year In Pictures.** Also: Hogan-Hart, Big Van Vader, Sabu, Brian Pillman.  
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**Sept. 1996 (Special Issue): WWF Midyear Report.** Also: Savio Vega, Sabu-Scorpio, Chris Benoit, Goldust, Olympians, Giant.  
**Oct. 1996: Muscling Back To The Top: The Warrior Is Ready To Rule Again.** Also: Warriors & Sasaki-Steiners & Norton, Razor & Diesel, Mabel & Mo, Blue Meanie.  
**Nov. 1996: Brian Pillman: Next WWF Champ!** Also: Giant-Sting, Ray Stevens, Dick Murdoch, Cloudy, John Tenta, WCW shuffle.  
**Dec. 1996 (Special Issue): WWF vs. WCW: Top 10 Faceoff!** Also: Ahmed Johnson, Ric Flair, Mero & Sable, Goldust, Sandman.  
**Holiday 1996: WCW Shocker: Randy Savage Is Set To Join Hulk Hogan's NWO!** Also: Steve

Austin, Michaels-Goldust, Arn Anderson, Van Dam-Sabu, Steve Williams.  
**Jan. 1997: It Could Happen! Hogan's Next Move ... Buy WCW!** Also: Undertaker, New Jack, Owen-Bulldog, Ted DiBiase.  
**Feb. 1997: Wrestling's Top Stars: What 1997 Has In Store For Them!** Also: Michaels-Hart, Pit Bull I, Rey Mysterio Jr., Kevin Nash.  
**March 1997 (Special Issue): 1996—The Year In Pictures.** Also: Hulk Hogan, Austin-Pillman, Dallas Page, Hunter Hearst Helmsley.  
**April 1997: Sting: Who Screwed Up This Man's Mind?** Also: Hart-Michaels, NWO, Sandman, Barry Windham.  
**May 1997: Hogan's Headache: The Pain Is Piper! And The Remedy Is Revenge!** Also: Michaels-Hart, Guerrero, J.C. Ice, gang violence, Marc Mero.  
**July 1997: Inflighting, Politics, Egos: Is The NWO Losing Its Edge?** Also: WWF-ECW, Dean Malenko, Super 8 tourney, Jerry Lawler.  
**Aug. 1997: Dream Match! Sting's Bat & The Side Of Hogan's Head!** Also: Ahmed Johnson, Kimberly & DDP, WrestleMania sideshow, Jeff Jarrett, Jimmy Snuka.  
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**March 1998 (Special Issue): 1997—The Year In Pictures.** Also: Rey Mysterio Jr., Undertaker, Giant, Road Warriors.  
**April 1998: "We've Won!" Maybe ... But Can The NWO Handle Its Own Success?** Also: Ken Shamrock, Steiners-Warriors, Douglas & Francine, Rocky Maivia.  
**May 1998: Mike Tyson: Stepping Into Wrestling Hell!** Also: Bischoff-Zbyszko, Hunter Hearst Helmsley, Meng & Barbarian, ECW, "Hollywood" Hogan.  
**June 1998 (Special Issue): "Hollywood" Hogan: 10 More Dirt Deeds ... And He's Outta Here!** Plus: Randy Savage, DeGeneration X, Jim Cornette, Randy Savage, then and now.

## THE WRESTLER

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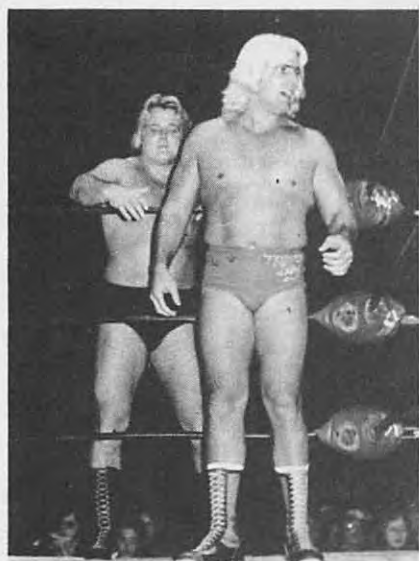
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Flair and his friend Greg Valentine in a tag team match (left). Just how long can they trust each other now?

**T**HE SPLIT BEGAN with a seemingly innocent television interview. Blackjack Mulligan was speaking to one of the local announcers. With an inhuman snarl, Ric Flair charged forward, grabbed Mulligan's beloved cowboy hat, and tore it into little, pathetic pieces.

Mulligan and the entire crowd, were stunned. Here was a friend of his, allegedly. A friend who would

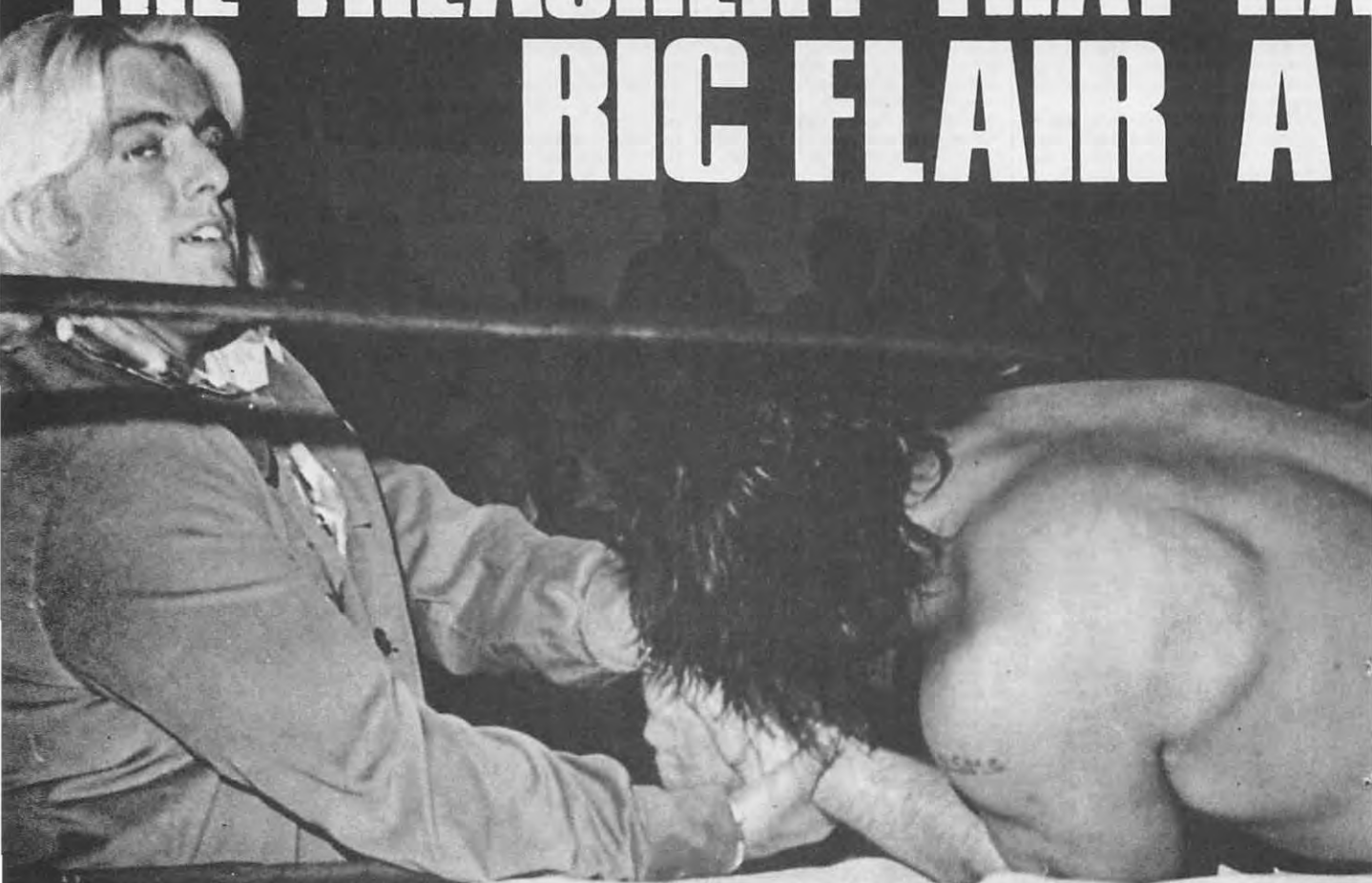
destroy Mulligan's most prized possession. A friend? No, a friend does not do that.

Shortly afterwards, Mulligan converted to the ways of the scientific community. His conversion was met with disparaging grunts from Flair.

"That ugly pansy just couldn't take it," Flair snorted. "Glad I don't have to bother with him."

Flair, for all his contempt of Mulligan's sudden shifting of allegiances, still remembered the intensity of their friendship. For years, whenever Flair would wrestle someone, he would go back and tell Mulligan all about that

# THE TREACHERY THAT HAS RIC FLAIR A



**Ric Flair has trusted only two men during his wrestling career—Greg Valentine and Blackjack Mulligan. Now that Mulligan has turned on him, Flair trusts no one. This has made Ric the most ruthlessly dangerous grappler alive!**



opponent. And Mulligan would accord him the same courtesy. It was inconceivable that Mulligan would ever turn on Flair despite the fact that Flair held the United States heavyweight title, a belt Mulligan unabashedly coveted.

"I want that title," Mulligan said. "Yeah, I know who has it. I still want it."

Of all the hundreds of wrestlers who could pose a challenge to his crown, Blackjack Mulligan was not considered among this group. Or so Flair thought. Until . . .

"I want Ric Flair. I want to smash that cowardly animal's face. I want his belt," Mulligan issued

his challenge.

Flair blanched when he heard the news. He couldn't believe that Mulligan would say that to him. He was a friend. Maybe not a friend like he once was, but all those years of friendship had to mean something.

"I couldn't believe it when I heard that treacherous oaf challenge me, call me out," Flair said. "Sure I tore up his hat, but

that was in a fit of rage over something else. It wasn't personal, understand?"

"I tell you, if that oversized clod wants a fight, he's got one. Brother, he's getting himself into a rumble, a real fine rumble."

Rumble is an understatement for what transpired the night of the championship match. It was a grisly, dreadful match. Blood soaked everything, Flair,

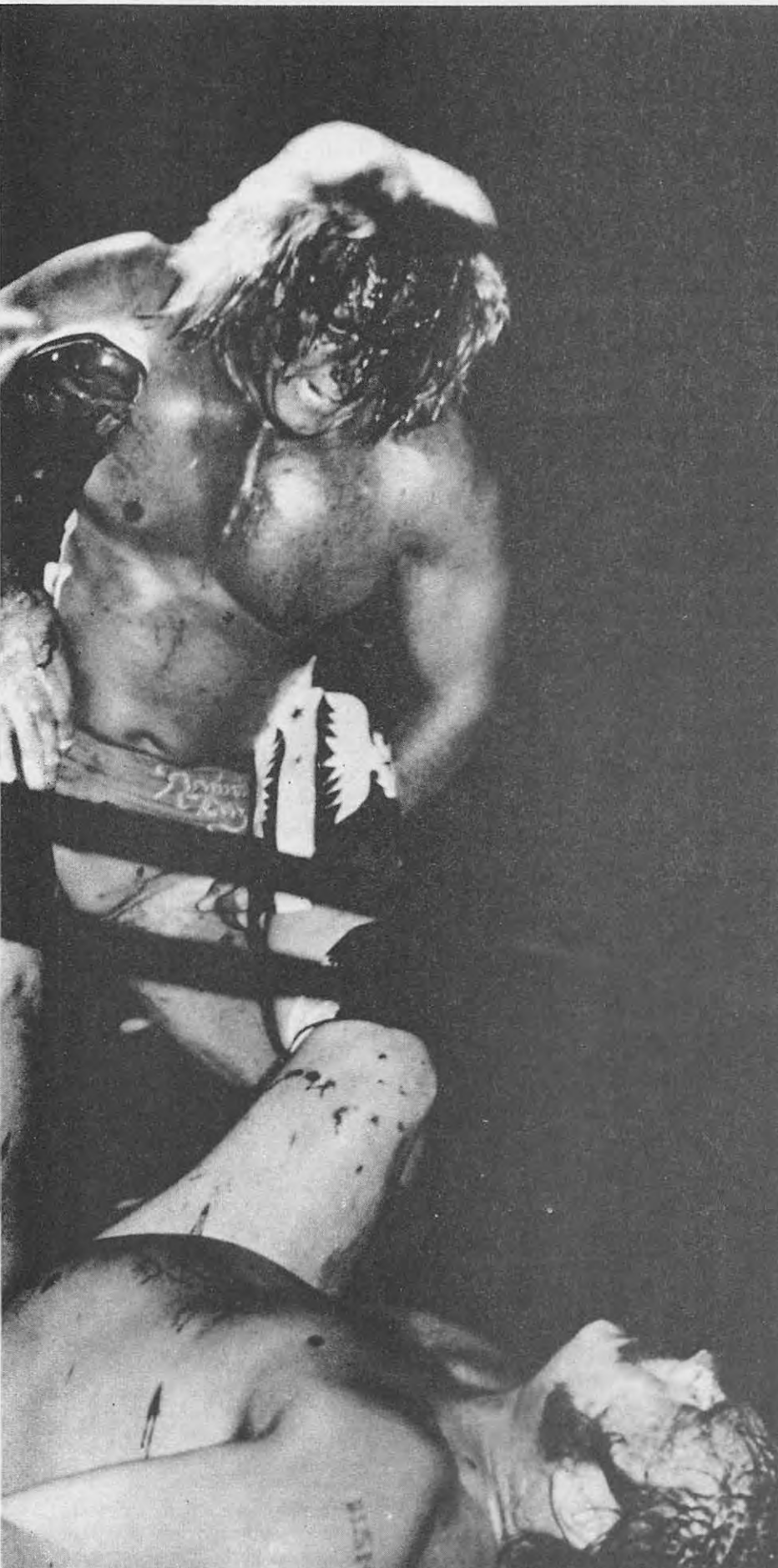
# S MADE KILLER

## WRESTLER CLASSIC!

For years, Ric Flair has thrived on being what he calls "the dirtiest player in the game." Check out this "Wrestler Classic" from November 1978 to find out what might have made him such a dirty wrestler in the first place



During the days when they were friends, Flair helped Mulligan many times. Ric passes Blackjack a foreign object to use on an opponent several months ago (left). Now Flair and Mulligan are no longer friends as is evident (above) as the bloody war goes on.



Flair entered the ring looking snazzy (above), but was rendered a bloody mess (left).

Mulligan, the canvas, dripped onto the referee, slid over onto the ringside tables.

Blood, blood, blood. Blood of treachery and reprisals. Blood of a friendship destroyed. Permanently. Blood which has left an indelible, malignant scar on Ric Flair's soul. Blood which has transformed Ric Flair into an encrazed killer, like a wounded killer, throbbing with the hurt of treason.

"After this match," Flair winced as some salve was applied to one of his many cuts. "I know I can't trust anyone anymore. No one is above suspicion, I have to think anyone will stab me in the back if they get the chance. Mulligan did it, anyone can."

Stabbing was one of the few things not done that night. They tore at each other with chilling ferocity, utterly oblivious to the consequences, to themselves, surely to each other.

"Yeah I wanted him. That guy called me a traitor? Well, he isn't fit to live, hear that?" Mulligan stormed.

"I wanted the title and I should have gotten it. I could have gone on. That's a lousy excuse, stopping a match because there was too much blood."



As Mulligan tries to rise from the canvas, Flair kicks him in the stomach. Flair was more ruthless than ever in this match.



It was obvious that Flair and Mulligan would have fought this one down to the proverbial death. Since there are laws against murder, it was mercifully stopped, with Flair retaining the belt. And the scars.

"You know what it's like not to be able to trust anyone?" Flair said in a high, punctured voice. "I can't trust anyone.

"Mulligan and I were like brothers, closer, even, 'cause with brothers you're born together, but with a friend you come together on

your own.

"But after the way he stabbed me in the back, I have to mistrust anyone who comes close to me. I see how everyone in the wrestling world is after me. Now what do I do?

"Do I wait for them, stupidly keep walking into ambushes so they can bludgeon me like Mulligan tried to do?

"Or do I start attacking everyone, on the idea that everyone is after me, that everyone wants my hide, that I better get them before

they get me?

"Hah, you know what choice I have. The decision has been made for me. I have to go on the warpath, a real killing warpath with only mutilated bodies behind me. This really woke me up, damnit and I'm not taking anymore chances.

"I won't confide in people. No more. You have to really prove yourself before I'll trust you again. As far as I'm concerned, everyone is an enemy.

"And you know what I do to enemies." □

# Wrestler<sup>THE</sup>

## TOP 10

- 1 BILL GOLDBERG**  
270, Tulsa, OK  
(2) WCW World & U.S. heavyweight champion
- 2 STEVE AUSTIN**  
252, Victoria, TX  
(1) WWF World champion
- 3 THE UNDERTAKER**  
328, parts unknown  
(-) No. 2 contender: WWF World title
- 4 BOOKER T**  
250, Harlem, NY  
(-) WCW TV champion
- 5 KEN SHAMROCK**  
235, San Bernardino, CA  
(5) No. 3 contender: WWF World title
- 6 LEX LUGER**  
265, Chicago, IL  
(-) No. 3 contender: WCW World title
- 7 ROCKY MAIVIA**  
272, Pearl City, HI  
(7) WWF Intercontinental champion
- 8 ROB VAN DAM**  
237, Battle Creek, MI  
(9) ECW TV champion
- 9 STING**  
260, Venice Beach, CA  
(3) No. 4 contender: WCW World title
- 10 KENTA KOBASHI**  
261, Fukuchiyama, Japan  
(-) All-Japan Triple Crown champion



Kane

## TAG TEAMS

- 1 BILLY GUNN & JESSE JAMES**  
Combined weight: 496 pounds  
(1) WWF World tag team champions
- 2 NWO WOLFPAC**  
Combined weight: N/A  
(-) WCW World tag team champions
- 3 SABU & ROB VAN DAM**  
Combined weight: 447 pounds  
(5) ECW tag team champions
- 4 MASA CHONO & HIROYOSHI TENZAN**  
Combined weight: 505 pounds  
(-) IWGP tag team champions
- 5 EIGHT-BALL & SKULL**  
Combined weight: 517 pounds  
(-) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 6 JIM NEIDHART & DAVEY BOY SMITH**  
Combined weight: 520 pounds  
(-) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 7 LOD 2000**  
Combined weight: 560 pounds  
(3) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 8 CHRIS CANDIDO & LANCE STORM**  
Combined weight: 457 pounds  
(-) No. 1 contenders: ECW tag title
- 9 PUBLIC ENEMY**  
Combined weight: 583 pounds  
(-) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 10 THE HEADBANGERS**  
Combined weight: 488 pounds  
(9) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title

## WCW

World Champion:

**BILL GOLDBERG**

(1) 270, Tulsa, OK

- 1—HOLLYWOOD HOGAN**  
(C) 275, Venice Beach, CA
- 2—BOOKER T**  
(7) 250, Harlem, NY
- 3—LEX LUGER**  
(5) 265, Chicago, IL
- 4—STING**  
(2) 260, Venice Beach, CA
- 5—SCOTT HALL**  
(-) 290, Miami, FL
- 6—CHRIS JERICHO**  
(10) 225, Vancouver, British Columbia
- 7—DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE**  
(-) 260, Tampa, FL
- 8—THE GIANT**  
(8) 430, parts unknown
- 9—DEAN MALENKO**  
(3) 216, Tampa, FL
- 10—ULTIMO DRAGON**  
(-) 175, Mexico City, Mexico

## WWF

World Champion:

**STEVE AUSTIN**

(C) 252, Victoria, TX

- 1—ROCKY MAIVIA**  
(1) 272, Pearl City, HI
- 2—THE UNDERTAKER**  
(3) 328, parts unknown
- 3—KEN SHAMROCK**  
(4) 235, San Bernardino, CA
- 4—KANE**  
(9) 345, parts unknown
- 5—HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY**  
(2) 279, Greenwich, CT
- 6—OWEN HART**  
(5) 227, Calgary, Alberta
- 7—JEFF JARRETT**  
(7) 230, Nashville, TN
- 8—MANKIND**  
(-) 277, Truth or Consequences, NM
- 9—VADER**  
(8) 450, Denver, CO
- 10—X-PAC**  
(-) 212, Minneapolis, MN

## ECW

ECW Champion:

**SHANE DOUGLAS**

(C) 240, Pittsburgh, PA

- 1—ROB VAN DAM**  
(1) 237, Battle Creek, MI
- 2—TAZ**  
(5) 248, Red Hook, NY
- 3—LANCE STORM**  
(-) 234, Calgary, Alberta
- 4—BAM BAM BIGELOW**  
(8) 368, Mt. Laurel, NJ
- 5—JUSTIN CREDIBLE**  
(-) 225, Waterbury, CT
- 6—JERRY LYNN**  
(7) 214, Minneapolis, MN
- 7—SABU**  
(4) 225, Bombay
- 8—CHRIS CANDIDO**  
(10) 226, Carteret, NJ
- 9—AXL ROTTEN**  
(2) 302, Philadelphia, PA
- 10—SPIKE DUDLEY**  
(-) 155, parts unknown

## NWA

NWA Champion:

**DAN SEVERN**

(C) 265, Detroit, MI

- 1—ROD PRICE**  
(3) 265, Los Angeles, CA
- 2—COLORADO KID**  
(2) 231, Denver, CO
- 3—DORY FUNK JR.**  
(7) 250, Amarillo, TX
- 4—MR. GILLIS**  
(5) 221, Vancouver, British Columbia
- 5—BARRY WINDHAM**  
(1) 273, Sweetwater, TX
- 6—SID VICIOUS**  
(8) 318, West Memphis, AR
- 7—ERICH SBRACCIA**  
(-) 242, Boston, MA
- 8—DOUG GILBERT**  
(6) 241, Lexington, TN
- 9—RIP ROGERS**  
(9) 239, Cleveland, OH
- 10—LANCE DIAMOND**  
(-) 230, Richmond, VA



# OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board.

All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses

indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

For period ended July 10, 1998

**AAA: Champion**—Perro Aguayo Sr.; 1—Abismo Negro; 2—Pentagon; 3—Octagon; 4—Heavy Metal; 5—Fuerza Guerrera; 6—Cibernético; 7—Sangre Chicana; 8—Perro Aguayo Jr.; 9—El Corbado Jr.; 10—Latin Lover.

**ALL-PRO WRESTLING: Champion**—Maxx Justice; 1—Donovan Morgan; 2—Moondog Moretti; 3—Vic Grimes; 4—Vinny Massaro; 5—Robert Thompson; 6—Michael Modest; 7—Erin O'Grady; 8—Boom Boom Comini; 9—Tony Jones; 10—Frank Murdoch.

**EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion**—Glen Osbourne; 1—Reckless Youth; 2—Lance Diamond; 3—Inferno Kid; 4—Devon Storm; 5—Ace Darling; 6—Mike Quackenbush; 7—Boogie Woogie Brown; 8—Mr. Ooh La La; 9—Mark Shrader; 10—Christian Cage.

**GRANDE WRESTLING ALLIANCE: Champion**—Title Vacant; 1—George Steele; 2—Bob Steele; 3—Jake Lawless; 4—Mandingo Warrior; 5—Alexi Taktarov; 6—Jason Lives; 7—Ron Starr; 8—Koko B. Ware; 9—Middknight; 10—King Kong Bundy.

**INTER-CONTINENTAL PRO WRESTLING: Champion**—Steve Sharp; 1—King Mabel; 2—Treach Phillips Jr.; 3—Motley Cruz; 4—Nitetrain C. Crane; 5—Bill Ash; 6—Odell Buckingham; 7—Johnny Jett; 8—Johnny Morton; 9—Doug Masters; 10—Luke Graham Jr.

**MID-SOUTH PROMOTIONS: Champion**—Kevin Northcutt; 1—Mr. Wrestling III; 2—Rod Price; 3—Elijah Levay; 4—Guido Buttafucio; 5—Crazy Joe; 6—Kerry Rockwood; 7—Paul Edwards; 8—Redd Dogg; 9—Stan Sweetan; 10—Devil Boy.

**NATIONAL WRESTLING CONFERENCE: Champion**—Sabu; 1—Bobby Bradley; 2—Johnny Paine; 3—Suicide Kid; 4—The Russian Brute; 5—Greg Valentine; 6—Honky Tonk Man; 7—Jake Roberts; 8—Big Q.; 9—Koko B. Ware; 10—Mustafa Saed.

**NWA EAST: Champion**—Headshrinker Samu; 1—Quinn Magnum; 2—Gator; 3—T. Rantula; 4—J.B. Destiny; 5—Paul Atlas; 6—Brian Anthony; 7—Bubba the Bulldog; 8—Brandon K.; 9—Sean Evans; 10—Lord Zoltan.

**NWA NEW ENGLAND: Champion**—Erich Sbraccia; 1—Vic Steamboat; 2—Tony Rumble; 3—Knuckles Nelson; 4—Tony Atlas; 5—El Mascarado; 6—Joel Davis; 7—Devon Storm; 8—Pink Assassin; 9—Ace Darling; 10—Storm Trooper.

**PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion**—Julio Sanchez; 1—Reckless Youth; 2—Lance Diamond; 3—Christian Cage; 4—Glen Osbourne; 5—Tiger Khan; 6—George Steele; 7—Dave Patera; 8—Chris Krueger; 9—Mike Quackenbush; 10—Boogie Woogie Brown.

**POWER PRO WRESTLING: Champion**—Title Vacant; 1—Jerry Lawler; 2—Kane; 3—Brian Christopher; 4—Kid Wikkid; 5—Bill Dundee; 6—Billy Travis; 7—Giant King; 8—Streak; 9—Koko B. Ware; 10—B.J. Awesome.

**PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion**—Italian Stallion; 1—George South; 2—Black Angel; 3—The Baron; 4—Super Ninja; 5—Ripper; 6—The Breeze; 7—The Bodyguard; 8—American G.I.; 9—Flaming Youth; 10—Cruel Connection II.

## NEW JAPAN

**IWGP Champion:**  
**TATSUMI FUJINAMI**  
(C) 234, Oita, Japan

- 1—**KENSUKE SASAKI**  
(1) 233, Tokyo, Japan
- 2—**MASA CHONO**  
(3) 235, Tokyo, Japan
- 3—**SHIRO KOSHINAKA**  
(9) 225, Tokyo, Japan
- 4—**KOJI KANEMOTO**  
(-) 205, Osaka, Japan
- 5—**HIROYOSHI TENZAN**  
(4) 270, Tokyo, Japan
- 6—**SHINYA HASHIMOTO**  
(2) 287, Gifu, Japan
- 7—**DON FRYE**  
(-) 235, Sierra Vista, AZ
- 8—**JUSHIN LIGER**  
(5) 206, Hiroshima, Japan
- 9—**EL SAMURAI**  
(-) 213, Tokyo, Japan
- 10—**KAZUO YAMAZAKI**  
(-) 182, Tokyo, Japan

## ALL-JAPAN

**Triple Crown Champion:**  
**KENTA KOBASHI**  
(2) 261, Fukushima, Japan

- 1—**JUN AKIYAMA**  
(1) 230, Hiroshima, Japan
- 2—**TOSHIKI KAWADA**  
(C) 245, Ashikaga, Japan
- 3—**AKIRA TAUE**  
(3) 265, Chichibu, Japan
- 4—**JOHNNY ACE**  
(4) 250, San Bernardino, CA
- 5—**MAUNUKEA MOSSMAN**  
(-) 245, Honolulu, HI
- 6—**GARY ALBRIGHT**  
(7) 343, Billings, MT
- 7—**WOLF HAWKFIELD**  
(-) 272, New Port Richey, FL
- 8—**TAKAO OMORI**  
(9) 221, Tokyo, Japan
- 9—**HIROSHI HASE**  
(-) 225, Kanazawa, Japan
- 10—**STAN HANSEN**  
(5) 322, Borger, TX

## EMLL

**EMLL Champion:**  
**UNIVERSO 2000**  
(C) 215, parts unknown

- 1—**EL HIJO DEL SANTO**  
(3) 180, Tulancingo, Mexico
- 2—**RAYO DE JALISCO JR.**  
(-) 270, Guadalajara, Mexico
- 3—**NEGRO CASAS**  
(9) 175, Mexico City, Mexico
- 4—**FELINO**  
(-) 165, Mexico City, Mexico
- 5—**ULTIMO DRAGON**  
(-) 175, Mexico City, Mexico
- 6—**DR. WAGNER JR.**  
(-) 215, Mexico City, Mexico
- 7—**ATLANTIS**  
(4) 180, Guadalajara, Mexico
- 8—**EMILIO CHARLES JR.**  
(-) 222, Mexico City, Mexico
- 9—**BLACK WARRIOR**  
(6) 221, Mexico City, Mexico
- 10—**SHOCKER**  
(7) 185, Guadalajara, Mexico

## PROMO AZTECA

**Promo Azteca Champion:**  
**KONNAN**  
(C) 237, Mexico City, Mexico

- 1—**PIERROTH JR.**  
(1) 251, Cuernavaca, Mexico
- 2—**PIRATA MORGAN**  
(2) 221, Mexico City, Mexico
- 3—**TINIEBLAS JR.**  
(3) 256, Monticlova, Mexico
- 4—**SILVER KING**  
(5) 215, Mexico City, Mexico
- 5—**BLACK MAGIC**  
(4) 238, London, England
- 6—**LIZMARK JR.**  
(6) 249, Acapulco, Mexico
- 7—**JUVENTUD GUERRERA**  
(7) 165, Mexico City, Mexico
- 8—**TARZAN BOY**  
(8) 205, Monterrey, Mexico
- 9—**PSICOSIS**  
(9) 200, Tijuana, Mexico
- 10—**EL DANDY**  
(10) 235, Jalisco, Mexico

# Ratings

## ANALYSIS

**He finally made it!** We were so close to doing it months ago. Our ratings committee debated the issue for hours on end (okay, maybe that's a *slight* exaggeration). But when it came right down to it, before **Bill Goldberg** beat **Scott Hall** and **Hollywood Hogan** on the night of July 6 and electrified the more the paid crowd of nearly 40,000 in the Georgia Dome by winning the WCW World title, we couldn't quite bring ourselves to do it. We could not make Goldberg number one in our overall Top 10.



Bill Goldberg

But for at least this issue, he is the top dog. Here's why we have him ranked above WWF champ.

First and foremost, the new WCW World champion remains undefeated. He had won more than 100 consecu-

tive matches as of press time.

Second, no one who had dared to challenge him in WCW had even come close to beating him. Think about it: Can you recall anyone getting a two-count on "Da Man"? And there haven't been many *one*-counts, either!

Third, even before he took on Hogan and Hall, he had stepped up his level of competition and continued to dominate. **Perry Saturn** hasn't been able to do much against him. **Raven** got run over. Even **Sting** had no answers for him when they met in an impromptu challenge match on June 13 in Pittsburgh.

But understand that this is no slight to "Stone-Cold," who has had a lock on that top spot for months. Despite what **Vince McMahon** says, we feel Austin has been an exemplary WWF champion. He showed a ton of courage by coming back and regaining the belt from **Kane** a night after he lost it at King of the Ring. Let's see, in addition to Kane, he has beaten **Rocky Maivia**, **Dude Love** (and **Mankind**), and **Hunter Hearst Helmsley**, just to name a few of his more worthy challengers.

On the subject of ratings of a slightly different kind, the 1998 "PWI 500" is just around the corner. It'll hit newsstands October 6. One of the many tough questions we'll have to answer when we compile this year's "500" is this: Where does Goldberg belong on that list? He might still be undefeated when it comes time to answer that question, but we have to take into account the fact that he did face a lot of mediocre opponents during the last year. And the fact that his repertoire is still quite limited

(although this hasn't hurt him at all yet).

Right now, "Stone-Cold" is the front-runner to grab the number-one spot on that list, but does Goldberg belong in, say, the number-two spot? Hey, **The Giant** almost got number one in his first year in the sport (he was second behind **Shawn Michaels** in the 1996 "PWI 500"), so in Goldberg's case ... who knows?

**Good news for a change.** It's about time we saw some bonafide tag teams competing in WCW. Maybe the federation's tag team division isn't dying after all. This isn't to say we believe **Sting** and **Kevin Nash** deserve to be World tag team champions. Sure, they're capable of beating any team in WCW, and they might just beat every one of them at some point, but **J.J. Dillon** and the rest of the WCW Executive Committee made a big mistake when they ordered a match between Sting and **The Giant** for The Great American Bash, with the winner getting the tag belts and the right to choose his championship partner.



The Giant

Should a tag team title ever be up for grabs in a singles match?

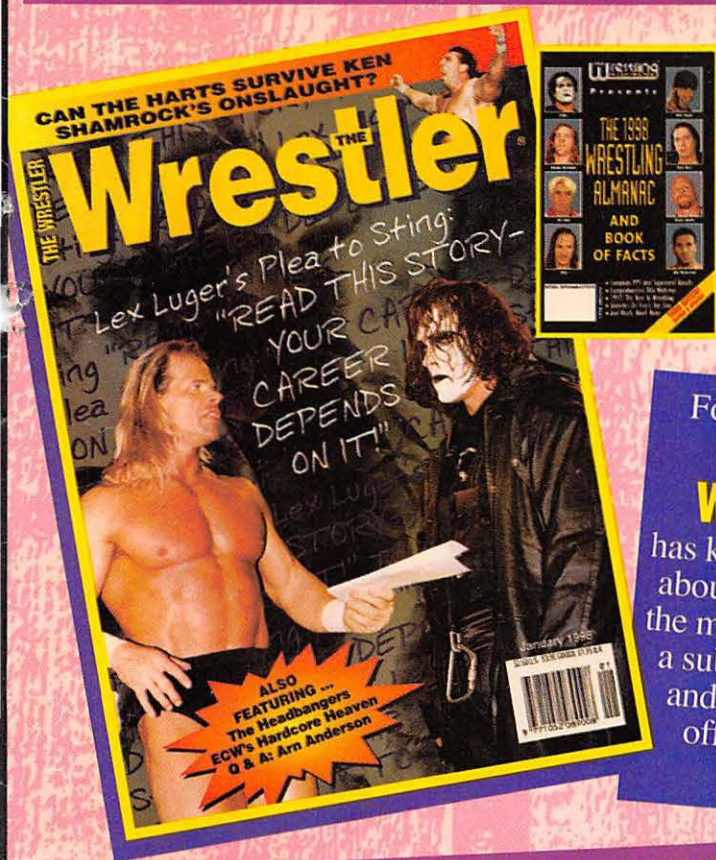
And the fact that Sting, having beaten The Giant, got to simply give one of the tag team belts to Nash and proclaim him a champion made absolutely no sense.

But at least there are some solid tag teams pursuing those belts again. **Booker T** and **Stevie Ray** have reunited as **Harlem Heat** and have already had a crack at the belts. **Public Enemy**, who, like the Heat, are former WCW World tag team champs, are making a bit of a comeback. They've made the tag team ratings this month. And let's not overlook duos like **High Voltage**, **Hugh Morris** and **The Barbarian**, **Chris Benoit** and **Steve McMichael**, and **Masa Chono** and **Hirotyoshi Tenzan** (the IWGP tag team champs), all of whom are active on the WCW circuit again. Any of those duos could make a run at the WCW belts. □

**That's all for this month.** If you have any questions or thoughts about all the injuries in wrestling right now, we want to hear from you. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o THE WRESTLER, Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.



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